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HISTORY OF SACRAMENT IN RELATION TO THOUGHT AND PROGRESS

HISTORY OF SACRAMENT *in* RELATION TO THOUGHT & PROGRESS

BY

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"Nihil enim visibilium rerum corporalium est quod non incorporale quid et intelligible significet."

JOHANNAS SCOTUS ERIGENA, *De Divisione Naturae*, v. 2.

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INTRODUCTORY

Of all departments of religious thought and practice, none is so attractive to some minds and so repellant to others as that of the Christian sacraments. Yet even the repulsion which it excites carries with it a certain historical interest. We are familiar with the disastrous effects of sacramental controversies in stimulating to sanguinary persecutions, in alienating ardent souls engaged on what might have been a common task, in strengthening a crushing obscurantism fatal to any influx of new life and light. On the other hand, it is through what, in a wide sense, we may speak of as sacramental traditions and feelings that we are able to stretch out hands to men and women of long-past ages and to approach the bed-rock of religious experience and faith. This attractiveness of the sacramental idea is especially realized in days, like our own, of great spiritual and material upheaval, in which we easily conceive that "the things which are seen are temporal," and would gladly welcome the view that "the things which are not seen are eternal." If such is the case, many may be inclined to take up a brief study of the place held by sacrament

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in life and religion from early times to our own. In this little work my chief object will be to elucidate the relation of sacrament to many conflicting currents, both in speculation and in active life, in past and present times, and possibly to indicate what scope there may be for it in the religion or religions of the future.

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History of Sacrament in Relation to Thought and Progress

CHAPTER I

SACRAMENT AND THE THREE ELEMENTS OF RELIGION

The general meaning attached to the words *sacrament* and *sacramental* will have to be developed in the course of our inquiry. Provisionally I may take as a practical definition a rather broadened and abbreviated version of the very careful one given in the Church Catechism: "An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, etc."—attributing a very wide denotation to the terms *sign* and *grace*, and omitting the following limitations as to original circumstances of institution.

The task of accounting for the extremely different standpoints assumed with regard to the subject, and its relative importance for different types of mind, may be facilitated if we consider the relation

of sacrament to the three Elements of Religion: the institutional or social; the intellectual (both doctrinal and speculative); and the mystic or personal. This division I borrow from the great work of Baron Friedrich von Hügel on *The Mystic Element in Religion*. For our purposes it is more convenient than the more generally accepted analysis into discipline, doctrine, and worship, though in a sense they may seem to lead to similar conclusions. In either case, none of the elements is primordial. Von Hügel's, again, may be made sixfold (as expanded for clearness' sake), or manifold. But it is convenient for our present purpose in that most people interested in religion, either because they are religious themselves, or because they see how important it is to other people, seem to be specially attracted by *one* of the three elements to such an extent as to disparage the importance of the other two; and sacrament has, at different times and under different conditions, been almost exclusively associated with some one of the three; thence the suspicion with which it has been regarded by those who have felt the power of just those ideas or forces which have been, temporarily or locally, perhaps, dissociated from sacramental observance.

(1) To consider first the institutional element: there can be no doubt that sacramentalism is generally a very strong bond in maintaining the unity and definite status of churches and the rights and duties

of members in relation to the community and its officials. Institutions stand, as just now suggested, for the disciplinary element in religion, and at times, especially when a religious society is struggling for existence, discipline is of very high importance. This is clearly seen by wielders of secular authority, and leads, where spiritual and secular authority are combined, to what is commonly, though not quite accurately,[1] termed Erastianism;—where they are separate, to excessive clericalism in opposition to the State. But apart from mere necessity, or from desire for power, institutional religion has an attractive force in that it stands for continuity: for loyalty to the past and aspirations for the future. Furthermore, and very emphatically in our own days, if institutional is also *social* religion, and the sacraments are mainly regarded as institutions, this element will appeal powerfully to those who seek and find in religion above all things a force to bind into one brotherhood those now divided by rank, sex, status, even race, and the other barriers against which the common practice of simple rites is a perpetual protest. This applies particularly to the chief sacrament of the Christian Church, though we shall find the same tendency working elsewhere.

But, on the other hand, the idea of discipline is not a very congenial one to the hearts of all. There are many kinds of discipline, that of the drill-sergeant

[1] See below, pp. 126, 127.

being less impressive but more in evidence than that of a benevolent or popular supervisor. And the enforcement of institutions that do not command universal respect on unwilling persons is a fatal policy, especially when such enforcement is primarily for the sake of uniformity; and most conspicuously so in ecclesiastical regulations. "Unity cannot continue long in the Church," said Archbishop Laud, "where uniformity is shut out at the church door." And in a sense he was perfectly right. The expectation of finding the same kind of service, at least approximately, in any Anglican church, and the consciousness that many thousands of his fellow-churchmen are using the same words and forms at the same time as he himself, makes the English churchman feel at home, so to speak, in the building where this form of service is used, and in company with those thousands in his act of worship. Yet Laud's endeavours to produce uniformity, being unsympathetically conceived and prematurely carried out, tended to disruption rather than to consolidation. And in his conscientious attempts to promote reverent behaviour in the performance of religious ritual, he provoked in some persons what might be called a conscientious irreverence, or at least indifference. But his conduct was piety itself compared with that of the statesmen of a generation later, who made sacramental observance or even "occasional conformity," a necessary condition for accepting

office in the state. Again, where baptism rather than civil registration is the essential condition on which a child is admitted into the commonwealth, we have a sacrament degraded to a civic form, and likely to lose its religious significance. It may be alleged that the recognition of ritual qualifications for civil purposes may sometimes have a good effect in perpetuating ceremonies which would else die out, but which may possibly, if continuously main tained, some day recover their meaning from a higher point of view. But even if this may occur, it appears, I think, evident from the above considerations that the close—still more the exclusive—connection of sacraments with the institutional side of religion has a tendency to lower their influence in religious society generally.

(2) To turn to the intellectual side of religion: its teaching on the relation of the divine to the human, and of human beings to one another, in the light of a theological supposition or a divine idea; there is no doubt that, as I hope to show later on, the whole theory of sacramental observance and sacramental grace is, in thoughtful minds, closely bound up with a highly spiritual view of the universe, and the effort to attain this view is not only stimulating to the moral and social side of human nature, but singularly bracing to the intellectual powers. It also helps to clear the mind in many ways, as it brings home to the thinker the necessary limits of thought,

and familiarizes him with the distinctions between appearance and reality, and between the knowable and the unknowable. Unfortunately, however, a superficial study either of the learned or of the popular literature of the subject might lead, and often has led, to a contrary opinion. For in most periods of ecclesiastical history, the Church has hardly risen to its task of training the reason to reach, as far as it can reach, the attainment of religious truth, and has sought instead to secure the acceptance of certain principles or statements which have been built up into a body of doctrine, to be accepted on authority. True, authority appeals, or is supposed to appeal, to the reasoning faculty, and the doctrine once accepted is drawn out and expounded by the use of logical rules and of scientific conceptions, such as we are accustomed to in ordinary fields of investigation. Still, the relative spheres of reason and authority cannot be said to be quite determinate either with the more dogmatic or the more critical of theologians.

It is obvious that authority, properly so called, belongs rather to the institutional than to the intellectual element in religion. Authority, in the scientific sense, as the consensus of experts, *ought*, some of us would say, to prevail, *in determining between truth and error*, over every so-called authority which makes no appeal, or only a partial or conditional appeal, to reason. In fact, a mediæval scholar

whose views we shall have to examine in due course, puts the case forcibly and clearly when he says:[1] "Authority proceeds from right reason, not reason from authority. . . . Rightful authority seems to me nothing elses than truth discovered by the power of reason and committed to writing by the holy Fathers for the benefit of posterity." Of course, a full explanation of this passage would require an examination of the term *reason* as used by the ancients, by mediævalists, or by ourselves. But however we may interpret the word, it is plain that in the early, and even in the later, Middle Ages human inquiry was warned off certain fields—*not* because it was incapable of tilling them profitably: a discovery sure to be made, sooner or later, by reason itself, but for fear lest its action should undermine the principles laid down by recognized authority. Thence the deplorable notion that the whole domain of theology, and even of sciences which have some theological bearing, is incapable of progress in itself and demands nothing but unintelligent assent in its students. Of course, I do not mean to assert that in the absence of any *odium theologicum* the advance of theology would have corresponded with that of less fundamental sciences, nor that even in other sciences in process of construction, conceptions have always been clear and arguments logical. But in

[1] *John the Scot* (Erigena), "De divisione naturæ," i, 69. See also Chap. VI.

religious controversy, the perpetual insistence on obedience to authority has led to a perverse and unnecessary obscurity and a lack of actuality very clearly marked in the subject with which we are now dealing. In reading any account of the controversies on the sacraments, in early and even in mediæval times, it requires a great effort of the historical imagination to realize that the terms employed can ever have conveyed any intelligible meaning. Apart from some meaning, however, original or derivative, they could hardly have aroused a fierce persecution or a preference for resistance unto death rather than assent.

It may be said, then, that the intellectual element in religion has ever found a fruitful field in the sacramental idea. Possibly this may lead, on further study, to the statement that those who most felt the force of that idea were led to build rather on Platonic than on Aristotelian conceptions. It must, however, be borne in mind that all philosophy in the days of the early Church was eclectic. Plato would hardly have recognized Neo-Platonism as his own child, nor would it be fair to represent Aristotle as the main source of Mediæval Scholasticism. In any case, the line of thought we have been following may make it clear to our minds why intellectual Christians, whether of the speculative or the dogmatic type, have differed widely in their sacramental principles, and why the unintellectual have not

unfrequently turned from the whole subject in disgust.

(3) But with the third : the personal and devotional element in religion, should we not expect to find things otherwise ? Many nowadays who have become estranged from religious observances and institutions, and yet more from authoritatively declared religious doctrine, have discovered a common ground with believers of the orthodox type in the feelings aroused by the significant ritual of the Church, especially when it is hallowed by the associations of many centuries and interpreted according to the proclivities of many minds. Yet even here there are tendencies working in a contrary direction. Religious feeling, where unrestrained by fixed rules and unrationalized by serious thought, is apt to run off into strange vagaries—to degenerate into puerile superstition and non-moral, if not immoral, tendencies in general conduct. In reaction against this kind of excess, we naturally find, in many quarters, a depreciation of what is " impressive " or emotional in religion. It is suspected as being without a solid foundation, and the practical necessities of every-day life tend to reduce it to a minimum.

But to those who see the value of institutions without wishing for a quasi-military rule in the religious sphere ; and those who believe in the possible and lawful application of all the powers of the human mind to the perennial yet ever-changing

questions of theology; and even more, perhaps, to those who seek for themselves and for the men and women of their generation a fuller access, by means of significant and symbolic action and reception, to the Eternal Source of spiritual life and joy: a study of what the sacraments have been in the past and a forecast of what they may be in the future may prove not only a distraction, but a practical help amid the storms and stress of the present day.

CHAPTER II

SACRAMENT IN PRIMITIVE RELIGION—SOCIAL AND LEGAL ASPECT OF CEREMONY

The relation of Sacrament to primitive forms of religion is an extremely difficult and elaborate subject of investigation, nor is a fundamental treatment of it necessary for our present purpose. Origins, even if they can be accurately distinguished and defined, often go but a little way towards the understanding of a fully developed institution. Still, seeing that very much of an archaic, if not primitive, nature has been and is still associated with all use of material objects, to illustrate spiritual conceptions, or to stimulate spiritual activity, it seems necessary to glance for a moment at some features of the symbolic ritual of backward peoples, as gathered from anthropologists, archæologists, and historians of antiquity. But first we should make it clear what we mean by *primitive* religion, and how we would differentiate sacramental from non-sacramental ritual.

It may not be superfluous to remind some readers that in spite of the admirable and effective labours

of our many scientific anthropologists, primitive man and his primitive religion are yet to be discovered. As to our own ancestors—in the spiritual or the material sense—they are far from primitive, even when we first catch sight of them, while the modern savage can hardly ever be taken to represent any race which has developed from the savage state. Furthermore, the most eminent of our investigators of ancient or of uncivilized modern ritual differ considerably as to the classification of ceremonies under the heads of religion and of magic respectively.[1] Setting aside the view that *all* magic comes under the head of the black art, and really is, or professes to be, a means of bringing occult and malevolent agencies to act in human affairs, and that *all* religion is directed to winning the aid of beneficent divinities, we may either acknowledge magic as a lower or inchoate form of religious observance, or take it as something quite distinct in nature. In the latter case, by magic, man endeavours to gain some kind of control (pseudo-scientific or other) over the forces of nature or the living creatures on which he depends, as in savage ceremonies of "rain-making," or of fictitious or imitative hunting; by religious rites, he tries to

[1] English readers naturally look for a mine of information and for luminous principles of arrangement to Sir J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough* and other works. A careful summary of the main differences among anthropologists is to be found in Dr. R. R. Morett's article on "Magic" in Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics.*

render propitious the more or less anthropomorphically conceived agents which guide natural processes and phenomena. If these agents are not unassailably strong, and men try to coerce or to threaten them, the act—though prompted by unfriendly or impious sentiment—is still rather religious than magical. The higher religious view invokes some element of admiration felt by the worshippers for the divinity, and supposes that man must put himself into right relations [1] with the powers which rule his life. This may involve the careful performance of an elaborate system of ritual. If the relation be conceived as possibly an intimate one, it may suggest actions which imply the actual imparting of divine power to the worshipper, or even raise him to participation in the life of his divinity.[2] At the same time, a good deal that goes to the making up of ritual may be originally of the nature of sport, or of spontaneous and purposeless activity,[3] which may later on harden into custom. But in every case of ritual, *some* common purpose is usually assigned which may, or may not, be originally connected with the practice followed.

Hitherto, though a provisional definition of

[1] See Dr. Warde Fowler's works on Roman religion.

[2] See Dr. Farnell on the *Evolution of Religion* in this Series, and Hibbert Lectures on "The Higher Aspects of Greek Religion"; Dr. Robertson Smith on "Sacrifice" (*Encyclopœdia Britannica*); also A. Loisy: *Les Mystères Paiens et le Mystère Chrétien.*

[3] See Marett, *loc. cit.*

sacrament has been accepted, we have confined ourselves to practices on which that name is conferred in which certain material acts are supposed to derive their significance from intentions or ideas which have not any evident connection with these material acts themselves. Now, if we apply this description (a rough working definition) to some of the forms and ceremonies of early and backward peoples, we seem to see that certain of these forms have much more claim to be called sacramental than others. Thus some of the operations carried out with a view to obtaining, say, a good harvest, a refreshing rain, or a plentiful quarry, may be simply undertaken with a view to secure the desired result. The apparatus employed may be used for that end without any reference to any other series of events or occult forces. It is only as if a wheel were turned to fire a torpedo; the connection might be too elaborate to trace, but there should not necessarily be anything of mystery about it, nor anything of a symbolic character. Ritual directly followed with the intention of securing specific objects falls, we may say, below the sacramental level. On the other hand, when men have arrived at anything like an anthropological theism in their interpretation of nature, sacrament is again ruled out. Presents, entreaties, even threats, although they may be invested with ritual and customary dignity, have no *double entente*, if the supposition is that the deity or the haunting

spirit may be bribed, persuaded, or frightened, as a mortal man might be. At the same time, it would be wrong to say that either the use of contagious and sympathetic magic, or the practice of prayer and sacrifice, was unconnected with sacramental ideas. The original connection in the former case may be lost; in the second, formularies and details may have become unintelligible, and a new meaning may have been applied to them which belongs to a different conception of the relations between the divine and the human. Thus sacrament may sometimes have originated in what was not originally either sacramental or symbolical. But it is desirable here to distinguish these two expressions.

The distinction between sacrament and "mere symbol" has been made in various ways by religious systematizers. We shall again have occasion to deprecate the term *mere*, as a question-begging appellative, but for the present it may be retained. The difference is commonly taken to be, that whereas in symbolism pure and simple the practice, however originated, has become conventional and ineffective, the idea of sacrament implies an actual potency in the performance of the action to bring some spiritual or at least non-material power into play. Thus, a religious procession or dance, at one time symbolical, would seem to have no ulterior intention. But when, to take an example from fairly primitive religion, the whole object of religious observance is to secure

some kind of power, such as that called by the Pacific Islanders *Mana*,[1] these observances, so far as they are symbolical, are also sacramental. There is, of course, a weak point in the distinction, in that *nothing* which human beings do habitually, seriously, and as fulfilling some function in family or public life, can ever be without a reactive effect on mind and character. Thus the rhythmic dance just referred to, whether or not it were intended to increase *Mana* or its equivalent, must tend to a heightened state of the emotions and of certain human susceptibilities. This, it may be said, is a merely subjective result. But as we shall all have to acknowledge, the subjective element in the religious consciousness is of high, if not supreme, importance. We might be led to the conclusion that the difference between the symbolic and the sacramental in religious observance was one of degree rather than of kind. It is, perhaps, by some such tacit agreement that dissensions as to "sacramental grace" and "the Real Presence" have, in non-theological circles, become less virulent than they used to be. But if so, we must remember that differences in degree are important likewise.

We have already seen that the interpretation of religious ritual practised in one age to those who follow its customs in later days tends to obscure both origins and significance. The very continuance of the practice, from a political or a social point of

[1] See Dr. Marett's Article "Mana" in *Enc. Rel. Eth.*

view, may seem to be the great desideratum. To take an example: it is difficult to see how educated and refined society in the time of the Antonines could have felt anything but revulsion from the hideous carnage of sacrifice. In general, one would hardly realize what we know now that there was, in ancient sacrifice, a mystic element with which men who believed in an indwelling Deity must feel sympathy. Yet Marcus Aurelius was unusually insistent on the sacrifice of bullocks—so much so that the white oxen are feigned to have drawn up a pathetic petition to him against their extermination. He was not a reactionary, and the sacrifices seem to have had no place in his own religious life. With the pagan idealists, a century and a half later, the case was different, and the practices connected with oriental mythology invested with mystic meaning were made into what English Puritans would call "means of grace," or what Pacific Islanders would regard as measures for securing *Mana*.

Where a victim was sacrificed and eaten, and the feasters believed that they verily received the flesh and blood of the god, to their own strengthening and profit; where a pillar, by anointing or some other process, was invested for those who beheld it with human or superhuman attributes; where the joy and life of spring and summer were associated causally or otherwise with some ritual of dying and resuscitation—there we have at least the germs of a

sacramental system. There is not, *prima facie*, *any moral* element whatever, hardly any that we should call spiritual. But where Divine power has come to be associated with Divine righteousness, and the joy and beauty of the world with an indwelling Life, or it may be an all-embracing Love: there we have the principles of a higher religion grafted more or less on the customs of barbarous superstition.

It would thus seem that sometimes the sacramental character of religious acts is more due to later interpretations of these acts than to their original purport. These interpretations may be of a mythological kind—quasi-historical or quasi-scientific—and may have been produced with a moral meaning, or to satisfy legitimate curiosity. Of course, many solemn religious acts may have a really historical origin which is preserved to posterity in the rite, or may have a natural efficacy justified on scientific principles. The words *true* and *false*, *religious* and *superstitious*, mark the circumstance that the justification of the rite commends, or does not commend, itself to the reason and conscience of those who accept it or criticize it.

We must not, however, regard the ritual or the beliefs connected therewith as having primarily an individual bearing. There can be little doubt that early beliefs and practices of a religious nature are not only common property of the clan or horde, but are an essential element in community life. If

primitive man is entirely bound by convention, it is not because he is "born free . . . everywhere in chains," but because, in the struggle for existence, those groups of human beings have the advantage who possess habits of common action. Such common action can hardly be attained, except by a body of conventions.

Here I would notice a fact of great importance: that the conventions and customary actions or rites belonging to any community prevail in their social or rudimentary political behaviour no less than in their dealings with the hidden or divine. We shall see how intimately connected with the idea of sacrament is that of the *covenant* which, we may say, belongs equally to the sphere or religion and to that of law. In fact, it is hardly possible, with simple people, to distinguish religious and legal ideas and practices. What there is of law has a religious sanction, and what there is of religion is recognized and enforced as law. But it specially interests us here to note that the essential character and the actual name attached to sacrament by the most legal-minded people of antiquity belonged to certain departments of primitive law. I refer to the Roman *legis actiones*, which, although from all accounts of them they belonged to a by no means primitive society, are part of an early system of legal organization. When property of a kind that could not easily be manipulated had to be exchanged, recourse was had

to symbols. As the process is described by Gaius[1]: "If it were a flock of sheep, one sheep or a tuft of wool was brought in; if it were land, or a house, or a ship, a sod, or brick, or piece of the ship was produced, and these were made the subjects of the formal acts just as if they were the whole of the property in dispute. Then the claimant, holding a rod . . . laid hold of the . . . article claimed." Then the prætor intervened, and ordered hands off on both sides, that of the claimant and that of the opponent who denied the claim. The latter immediately challenged the claimant to trial by the devotion (*sacramento*) of fifty pounds of copper asses or more. In historic times the pantomime was a mere prelude to the legal investigation. Earlier, it evidently stood for something more. There is nothing of what we call mysterious in the symbolism which takes the part for the whole, but there is a suggestion of the action of occult powers in the name given to the deposit. If this is to be regarded as a *piaculum*, or atonement, for the involuntary perjury of the disappointed claimant, it is strictly religious in character.[2] The term *sacramentum* is best known in Roman literature as the military oath of the soldier, though it is also used of oaths similar in character.

The devotion of some person or thing to avert

[1] *Institutes*, v. 16, 17.
[2] Greenidge's *Roman Public Life*, p. 56.

evil from the community, or even from a particular person, is a familiar process to all who have studied magic or primitive religion. The Jewish scapegoat is a familiar instance, and the driving out of a hag at Easter, to say nothing of the harrowing of Judas Iscariot still practised among Italian peasants, belong to the same range of ideas. These are so far sacramental in that they may be supposed to work for good or evil on some persons by fastening the evil with its consequences on some other person or thing. Perhaps the instances given are mere survivals, and the exact meaning attached to them in the days of their full significance is hardly to be recovered.

But the region in the religions of the ancient world in which sacramental ideas, as potent as in our own times, have been traced by many historians is that covered by the Greek and Oriental Mysteries. In these, at any rate in the earlier centuries of our era, we find rites of a simple or savage kind maintained with an interpretation which would make them vehicles of a religion at once emotional and ethical. It is not necessary to go into the much debated question whether to any extent the Babylonian or the Hellenic Mysteries had about them any of the character of a moral or universal religion: nor yet as to how far the use of the term *mysteries* by New Testament writers and Early Fathers implies any kind of borrowing on the part of Christians from pagan cults. With regard to the former question we are

confronted with the contrasts and coincidences between ceremonial purity and moral rectitude. As to the latter, round which an extensive literature has gathered,[1] it may be allowed that a give-and-take between the two zones, as it were, might be possible without conscious borrowing, and compatible with the strongest feelings of mutual hostility. We know, certainly, that whereas at many times and in divers nations men have hungered and thirsted for communion with Divinity and for the hope of a glorified life beyond death, these aspirations were, with many persons at least, associated with the Mysteries widely celebrated in the Græco-Roman world at the beginnings of Christianity; and that in those days, as probably in earlier ones, men and women capable of forming spiritual conceptions of Deity and humanity, saw in the symbols of divine communion the pledge of a nobler existence, both here and hereafter.[2] And the same hopes were more clearly indicated in the Christian sacraments than in other elements of Christian instruction and custom. The use of the words *sacrament* and *mystery*, though of course it cannot solve any wide problems, is interesting. The

[1] For some leading views on the subject, see the article, "Mysteries—Christian," by Dr. H. A. A. Kennedy in Hastings' *E. R. E.*; Loisy: *Mystères*, etc.

[2] For the exalted views attached to late pagan cults, see *inter alia* Julian's orations on *King Helios* and on the *Mother of the Gods*, and Plutarch's *Osiris and Isis*, and letter to his wife to console her on the loss of their child.

ideas of the two, on the etymological side, are not identical. A *sacramentum* (in its Latin significance) was originally, as we have seen, a legal pledge, with the idea of a religious bond thereby created, and the term came to be applied chiefly to the military oath. The idea of *μυστήριον* was (it is generally agreed) primarily that of secrecy. We have no evidence that any Christian observances were originally secret, though in days of persecution they must necessarily have been so. But before long, the proclamation "holy things for the holy" was proclaimed before the celebration of the Eucharist,[1] and the unbaptized had to leave the assembly. It is Tertullian who first identifies the two expressions.[2] We have a contemporary, if not earlier, identification on the pagan side, as Herodian, the Greek historian of the Emperors,[3] described the Roman military oath as: "The solemn *mystery* of the Roman Empire (or dominion)." And a good deal earlier, under Trajan, we have signs of a similar confusion of terms which has led to apparent misunderstandings. As is well known, Pliny the younger, when Governor of Bithynia, wrote to ask the Emperor how he was to deal with the increasing sect of Christians. He had inquired

[1] I cannot find that *baptism* was ever regarded as a secret rite.

[2] See Kennedy, *loc. cit.*, but cf. below. Of course, the secrecy of the Eucharistic ritual led to curious speculation as to its character, and may be answerable for some of the persecutions.

[3] viii. 7, 4.

of two ministering women (probably deaconesses) as to what went on in their assemblies, and had been told that, among other things, they took an *oath* to refrain from acts of dishonesty and unchastity. It seems probable that what the deaconesses said was that they celebrated a *mystery*, and that the official interpreted this as a *sacramentum*, and demanded the exact nature of the oath taken, to which he received an answer correct in intention, if not logically precise.

The idea of a covenant is, as we have seen, connected with that of a sacramental relation between man and some unseen powers; and a covenant, to be known and recorded, requires "outward and visible signs." The idea of a mystery is of a reaching out to the invisible, but finding in visible imagery some suggestions of the life and power which we naturally invoke, and which, as we cannot perceive them with our outward senses, belong, for us, to a supersensual world. The mysteries hanging over us are manifold, but there are three or four processes by which they most forcibly impress themselves on us. Everything which has to do with generation and death, with the maintenance of corporeal life by the consumption of substances external to the body, with the attainment of adult life, and with the departure from this life altogether, seems to have been specially associated with symbolic rites, and we may add to these occasions the assumption of power by one man over others

with the conferring of that power by the community. The union of the *μυστήριον* with the *sacramentum* is found when the confession of ignorance and weakness is met by an accretion of spiritual force, and accompanied by a sense of obligation. Such union we have in the sacraments as perpetuated in the faith and practice of the higher religions.

CHAPTER III

GERMS AND CLASSIFICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS — SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION AND PURIFICATION

From what has been already said as to the early appearance and significance of sacrament in human societies, and from what even the most cursory reader of church History knows as to the varieties in sacramental ritual and doctrine in different churches and at different periods, it is evident that we have abundant material for an exhaustive treatment of the whole subject. Anthropologists, travellers, practical churchmen and statesmen, historians both of ecclesiastical movements and of authoritative decisions, memoir-writers who have seen the spiritual influence of sacramental faith and observance in the most highly developed Christian characters: these each and all contribute elements sufficient for a synthesis of scientific work in what may well be regarded as a broad, if not boundless, field. It need hardly be stated that the present work has no such ambitious aim, but that its object will be achieved

if the general reader is helped towards clearness of thought on what is, however we regard it, a subject of practical and pressing importance. For such clearness, a few broad lines, marking distinctions observed by special investigators and thinkers, may at least be helpful, if not altogether adequate.

Everything implied in sacrament may be said to relate to the conferring of power and to the maintenance of a common life in a society. There need be no moral element, nor any that we should actually call religious, except is so far as the creation and upholding of order and discipline is an essential part or prerequisite of all morality and all religion. This point we have touched on already, and shall have to return to later on. Our object just now is to examine and classify the Christian sacraments as coming under the heads applicable to sacramental and symbolic ritual generally. For this purpose I shall take the seven sacraments acknowledged by the Roman Church rather than the two of the Anglican. The delimitation as to numbers, however, is not quite satisfactory, nor is it ancient. The seven are said to have been first definitely marked off by Peter Lombard. One early theologian would allow thirty.

By the English Ten Articles of 1536, three were specified, Penance taking its place with Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar. If a really logical division had been made, it would have been between those which belong to the life of every individual and

those with which some Christians are unconcerned. On this principle, it would be hard to see why Confirmation was left out, or Extreme Unction, unless the idea was to exclude them as non-essential. Marriage and Holy Orders are, of course, concerns of *some*, not *all*, members of the Church. But all alike are sacramental in idea, according to the general definitions adopted.

The classification of the Christian sacraments which, from the most general historical point of view, may here be followed is in one sense unsatisfactory, since some of these sacraments come under more than one head. But it may, perhaps, help to clear the ground. We may consider them as Sacraments (I) of Initiation, (II) of Purification, (III) of Participation in a Common Life, and (IV) of the Conferring of Authority. Under the first come Baptism (though it also belongs to the second) and Confirmation; under the second, Penance (or Absolution) and Extreme Unction; under the third, the Eucharist, and in some aspects Marriage; under the fourth, the conferring of Orders (in which I would include Coronation and, according to some forms of ritual, Marriage). I purpose to consider briefly in this chapter the Sacraments of Initiation and Purification, in the next that of a Common Life and of Authority. The classes necessarily overlap.

I. To begin with Initiation. This process may be one of three kinds: (*a*) reception at birth into the

community; (β) recognition of arrival at adult life, with the duties and privileges belonging to every full member of the community; and (γ) admittance voluntary, and sometimes secret, into the brotherhood of a religious or social club.

(α) It is evident that the idea of initiation with many of its associations early found its way both from heathendom and from some sects of Judaism into the minds of early Christians, and tended to modify both their observance and their belief with regard to Baptism and the other sacraments. It is superfluous to say that we find no mention of infant baptism in the New Testament, and it is only by great ingenuity that traces of it have been suggested. Some centuries after the first promulgation of Christianity many pious persons preferred to postpone the rite as long as possible; this was chiefly due to the second aspect of baptism just noticed, that of purification. The severity of penance to be done for sins committed since baptism suggested the reduction of such sins to a minimum by being baptized on one's death-bed.

With the spread of Christianity, however, and the mitigation of discipline, baptism comes to take the place of those non-Christian ceremonies by which a new-born child was received into the family, with a name and a recognized existence. It is impossible to say whether pædo-baptism was encouraged or retarded by the custom of the Empire which permitted

a father to receive or expose an infant according to his own will and judgment. Baptism would, of course, imply that the child was not rejected (no father could abandon a babe who was a fellow-Christian), but if he did not desire its life to be prolonged, he certainly would not have it baptized. In any case, however, the influence of Christianity was in favour of attaching greater sanctity to infant life.

Survivals of pre-Christian ceremony are to be traced in many baptismal usages. The giving of the name is, of course, one. Even details survive in some places. As in old days the Greek baby was carried three times round the hearth, his modern descendant is borne three times round the font. The substitution of sprinkling for immersion seems to have been gradual; the immersion was generally single, though the triune name was invoked. Triple immersion was later regarded as an Arian aberration (a sufficient proof, if one were needed, that the original Arians were not Unitarians). Sponsorship does not, of course, belong to the earliest observance, but every student of mediæval history must have been struck by the frequent instances of close and tender relation between sponsor and godchild. There is evidently some primitive connection underlying and afterwards assuming the form of this Christian relation, and one is tempted to find a link in foster-parentage, though the survival in folk-lore of the "fairy godmother" points to a different origin.

(β) When adults only were baptized, systematic

instruction naturally preceded the rite. This brought it more into line with the initiation into mysteries, which played so large a part in the religious life of the Græco-Roman world at the beginning of our era. On this side, however, it belongs historically to the preparation for complete initiation into the life of the Church which the already baptized person enters by Confirmation.[1]

Looking again to the ancient world, we know of the ceremonies by which a Roman boy was made into a man, and capable of wearing the *toga virilis*. In the old times, according to the Roman idea of the family as the unit in the State, physical capacity for becoming a *paterfamilias* was the one condition of accepted maturity. But with their customary skill in adapting their rules to necessity, the Roman practically extended wardship to a later period in the individual life. If, however, we like to trace analogies in Roman custom and Christian obligation, it may seem fitting and natural that the entrance upon the responsibilities of life should receive both due preparation and solemn recognition.

This was not, of course, the primary Christian explanation of Confirmation. It stands for two kinds of ceremonial: the laying on of hands and unction, both of which belong also to some of the Sacraments of Authority, but which here typify,

[1] For the idea of *sealing* as marking any person as the property of a deity, see the interesting comment on *Revelation*, ch. vii, in Canon Charles's *Commentary*.

or may be regarded as conferring, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and thus belong to initiation.

In a large number of churches (especially the Greek) the rites of Baptism and Confirmation, if not confused, are separated by no interval of time. The Roman Church has from early times kept them distinct. It is possible that unction may have been regarded as concomitant with baptism, owing to the ancient use of oil in the bath. As a general rule, though not universally, the authority to confirm is left to the bishop. It is rather curious that in the New Testament precedent the gift of the Holy Ghost was conferred on Cornelius and his family *before* their baptism, which that gift was held to justify. Later on, baptism as a rule precedes the ceremonies typifying the charismatic endowments.

It is always perilous to try to explain the growth of ceremonial and usage by appeals either to common sense or to utility. Yet enlightened expediency may justify and continue processes which originated in conceptions no longer dominant. The idea that children are admitted at birth into their family and people, but do not enjoy full privileges, nor acknowledge definite duties till the days of early manhood and womanhood, is valid in the Church as in the State. If there were no ceremonial practices to emphasize the fact, *il faudrait les inventer*—though impressive ceremonial is hard indeed to invent. The most characteristic element in the Anglican

office, the formal ratification by the young man or woman of the promises made in baptism, only dates from 1661, though the necessity of instruction by the "curate" before confirmation had been insisted on for some time. The prayer for the sevenfold gift of the Spirit is found in the Sarum Use. Without falling into the error of rating too highly any specially English elements in our religion and its ceremonies, we may note that this particular conception of Confirmation as a personal ratification of a vicarious promise rather than simply the confirmation of themselves (*confirmo te chrismate salutis*) suggests their new position in the Church, and affords an excellent opening for the religious instructor. Unfortunately, however, the idea of acceptance of individual responsibilities already binding is not always one easily grasped by untrained minds.

Although it would take us far afield—beyond the immediate objects of this series—to consider practically the uses and abuses of confirmation, it may be suggested that the falling of the rite into desuetude (which seems imminent) would be deplorable to the cause of moral and religious education. It has been attacked as *either* a mere form, in which case it seems to savour of gross superstition and even of a profane treatment of holy things, *or* as a heavy burden to be laid on the shoulders of young and undeveloped characters. Certainly as a "mere form"—especially as one connected with special artistic and social

adjuncts, often of a frivolous kind—Confirmation is liable to grave objection. On the other hand, if it is taken *too* seriously, or as supposing a state of spiritual development which few young people reach in their early teens, it may lead to morbid aberrations. Non-Episcopal bodies in England do not admit young people to full membership as a matter of course, nor even as a natural sequel of pious up-bringing. The Evangelical Revival, in its much needed insistence on the individual and experimental elements in Christian belief and character sometimes went too far. Where it laid down as condition the experience of the "new birth" or the change brought by "conversion" before any person could be brought within the pale of any Christian Church, it tended to keep many outside who ought to have come in, and to multiply doubts, questionings, and overwrought feelings in those who had been, or desired to be, admitted. Possibly this danger has now given way to one of an opposite kind: that of extreme laxity. The mean is to be found in the maintenance of certain conditions for active membership in the Church, with something of the ceremonial that sets forth in an impressive manner both the reality of the spiritual endowment and the obligation to keep the military oath. The age at which the ceremony is best performed must vary with different cases. It is surely gross materialism to insist on qualifying children to receive the Eucharist before they can in any way

grasp its significance. At the same time it is a positive drawback to a boy or girl to have to remain an outsider during the most rapidly formative periods of life. It is here, if anywhere, that the spiritual psychologist is needed to advise and direct.

II. It has already been said that the Sacraments of Initiation sometimes coincide with those of Purification. It need hardly be added that originally, as far as we can see, the idea of ceremonial purity has little to do with that of cleanliness, though they must in some way be connected, and some of the means of obtaining both: water, oil, fire, would point to an identity in practical needs. Nor is ceremonial uncleanness to be confused with moral delinquency. *Some* sins, like that of the parricide or the violator of marriage rules, may include impurity, for which ceremonies of a prescribed kind are necessary. But all legendary lore abounds in cases of curses or taboos incurred unawares by morally innocent persons. It may be said that a religious system only becomes what we call a higher *religion* when the fundamental ideas of purity, or a satisfactory religious condition, coincide in the life of the individual and the community. Of course the distinction between sins against God and sins against man (including self) seem to go back to this difference. The highest monotheistic religions would regard *all* sins against God as sins against man, regarded from a special point of view, and *vice*

versa. But this standpoint can only be reached after millennia of human experience.

The idea of baptismal regeneration, when combined with the practice of infant baptism, might seem to belong to the earlier and non-ethical theory of purification. All anthropologists tell us of the strange and uncanny imagination of primitive peoples by which everything to do with childbirth is reckoned as impure. Mother and child alike require some process of purgation before they can be regarded as quite safe. Christianity has sublimated the process in both cases; into the "Churching" of the woman and the Baptism of the infant, the former (which *might* count as a sacrament, though it generally does not) being reinterpreted as an act of thanksgiving for personal deliverance and the gift of offspring; the latter as the transmutation of a "child of wrath" into a "child of God, a member of Christ, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven." These phrases could not, of course, have any meaning apart from belief in the corruption of human nature, set forth by St. Paul and stereotyped for the Church by St. Augustine. In its cruder form the doctrine can hardly been have universally held by any but the severest pessimists—even Dante would only contemplate unbaptized infants as hovering in a painless limbo. As reinterpreted according to more natural and more scientific views, the original corruption of man is seen in evil tendencies, not in deep-seated

sinfulness, and the baptism of a child signifies his entry into a society in which these bad tendencies are being, or have been, overcome. But the purificatory idea on the sacramental side is chiefly prominent in catholic doctrine as to Penance and Absolution. This is apart from the fact (to be considered later) that Penance was not actually and authoritatively counted as a sacrament before the thirteenth century.[1]

(γ) All who have even a meagre acquaintance with early Church history know that confession of sins was originally public, and that exclusion from any community of believers and re-admission into the same rested with the community itself. It is also well known how severe were the demands made on those who committed sins *after* baptism ; a fact which commonly led to the postponement of baptism till as late a moment as possible. The process by which the hearing of confessions and granting of absolution came to be confined to a few specially authorized persons, was, of course, gradual, as was the growth of a system of rules by which ecclesiastical penalty was made proportionate to ecclesiastical, including moral offence. Here in dealing with the germs and the mutual relations of the sacraments, I would inquire a little into the analogies to be traced between the kinds of impurity contracted and wrong done,

[1] For a full discussion of this subject, and an account of early penitential usage, see Dr. Lea's exhaustive treatise on *Auricular Confession and Indulgence*, vols. i and ii.

with the penalties affixed in early society and in the early Church.

It has been pointed out by our great legal writers, first and most clearly perhaps by Sir Henry Maine, that in ancient society, notably that of the Romans, there was originally nothing corresponding to crime and punishment. There were *sins* by which men incurred impurity and became subject to the wrath of the gods, to be removed by purification; and there were injuries, or what we call *torts*, which demanded reparation to the injured party, with perhaps a fee to the arbitrator in the dispute. But a *crime* or offence against the State, to be punished by State officials according to regular procedure, is a product of comparatively advanced civilization. Primitive codes are commonly tables of fees due in reparation to the family of which a member has been murdered, where age, sex, and condition enters into the consideration, or to the owner of a stolen pig.[1] Now the offences which might lead to exclusion from the Church were necessarily of the first kind, though they might also belong to the second and third. *As* sins the penalty they demanded was penitence; a term which came, of course, to bear a technical rather than a moral meaning. At the same time, especially in lands to which a more advanced civilization had come primarily through and by means of the Church, a confusion between the spiritual

[1] See especially *Lex Salica*, Tit. 2.

and the political aspects of wrong-doing and remedial and retributive justice (the *forum internum* and *externum*) could hardly be avoided. The actual distinction visible to all was between public and private penance or discipline, and as might naturally be expected, the scope of public penance tended to become more and more restricted, till it only comprised flagrant delinquency or evil-doing in high places. The ecclesiastical distinction lay in the fact that public penance, followed by absolution, belonged to the bishop, private to the priest. The validity of confession and absolution between laymen where no priest was attainable seems to have obtained general recognition.

The question arises: by what rules should the priest assign spiritual penalties? There was a certain amount of material for his decisions in the decrees of Councils, but this came to be supplemented by handbooks drawn up for the purpose, the *Penitentials*, one of the chief of which was compiled by Theodore of Tarsus, our Greek archbishop of Canterbury, who died in 690. A good many penitential customs are of Irish origin. Besides those in use for dealing with the laity, we have penalties imposed in the rule of great religious houses. In so far as these rules are directly coercive and punitive, they hardly come within our present scope, as they are scarcely to be considered sacramental, and, as already stated, the sacramental character of Penance is not generally

recognized till a comparatively late date. Yet since it had to do with the purely spiritual sphere, and the discipline it maintained persisted and had further developments, it may be regarded as one of the most educative elements in religious life. A slight effort of imagination may convince one of the help towards self-realization which must have been promoted in a rough and non-introspective mind by the necessity of a periodical overhauling of memory as to one's personal acts and their motives. As regards the *Penitentials* themselves, a strong though fair-minded anti-sacerdotalist (Dr. Lea) says of them:[1] "Cruel and contradictory as were the *Penitentials* in many things, taken as a whole their influence cannot but have been salutary. They inculcated on the still barbarous populations lessons of charity and loving kindness, of forgiveness of injuries, and of helpfulness to the poor and the stranger as part of the discipline whereby the sinner could redeem his sins. Besides this, the very vagueness of the boundary between secular and spiritual matters enabled them to instil ideas of order and decency, and cleanliness and hygiene among the rude inhabitants of Central and Northern Europe. . . . It was no small matter that the uncultured barbarian should be taught that evil thoughts and desires were punishable as well as evil acts."

This may seem to assert that the mental confusion

[1] *Auricular Confession and Indulgences*, vol. ii, p. 106.

already noticed between sins, torts, and crimes was not unwholesome, as it helped to nourish a dread of sin as such. But on the other hand, that same confusion led to almost grotesque aberrations in opening up mechanically conceived escapes from sin in commutations of the kind familiar to men accustomed to wergilds and pecuniary damages for violence or theft. This naturally becomes more marked with the gradual acceptance of the "Treasure" theory, by which the merits of Christ and the Saints were constituted as a fund in the hands of the Pope to be applied to the delinquencies of sinners. To us this may seem one of the curious attempts, ever and anon repeated, to make religion a branch of mathematics. On the other hand, the practice of Confession, in intimate connection, though not identical, with spiritual direction, opened up a great sphere of usefulness to the curative religious psychologist. The history of the Mediæval Church shows us the desire of certain persons to choose their own confessors and spiritual directors, and the tendency of certain Orders (whether by real efficiency or mere plausibleness) to monopolize the care of individual souls. This is an important branch of religious history, but only indirectly connected with our subject, since no sacramental significance has ever been attached to religious education and direction.

(4) Extreme Unction, on its sacramental side, is one form of chrism, the other being Confirmation.

It was doubtless originally connected with faith-healing, as one sees in the Epistle of St. James. As it is always associated with the last Communion, it touches on what I have called the Sacraments of the Common Life. As accompanied by the last confession or absolution, it is a Sacrament of Purification. The soul of the dying Christian is supposed to throw off its last impurities and to enter the new world in a state of spiritual cleanness.

A short survey of the purificatory element in religion seems to lead to the conclusion that we have here what a contributor to this series calls a " baptism into Christ " of the several departments of ancient life. Taboo (utterly non-moral and non-spiritual) has come to be regarded as identical with the spiritual forces and hindrances by which man is held down in his aspirations after the Divine. The Sacraments of Purification are sign and symbol of the destruction of these forces and the removal of these hindrances through the action of the Spirit of Christ in the Church. Doubtless the sacraments have become materialized, and some investigators would see nothing in them but superstition and corruption. Possibly society may some day have outgrown them. But through the ages to this day they have a message for those who (whether closely or vaguely) discern their perpetual import.

CHAPTER IV

GERMS OF THE CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS (*continued*)—SACRAMENTS OF THE COMMON LIFE AND OF AUTHORITY

The field upon which we are about to enter is one that has been frequently traversed by bold and well-equipped explorers. To the student of human progress, social developments, and constructive ideals, it is by no means yet exhausted, since analogies which might have seemed remote and phenomena belonging to other departments of thought are ever making new contributions both to our data and our means of using them. It may seem presumptuous in any but a theological, historical, and anthropological expert combined in one to attempt an adventure into such thorny regions. Yet the ordinary thinker and reader may occasionally make suggestions which should help towards clear thinking, and those who wish to dig deeper may be referred to more fundamental works.[1]

[1] Besides the great standard works on ecclesiastical history, I may mention some in this series (especially of Percy Gardner,

III. In making a special class of Sacraments of the Common Life I may be accused of neglecting the fact that *all* the sacraments might be brought under that head. I think, however, that the Eucharist, and in one aspect Marriage, may more particularly fall under the designation, while the interrelation of all the Christian sacraments will be noticed as we proceed.

When we talk of the common life of any group of people, we use a highly complex expression. We mean more than a common set of ideas and institutions, and much more than a coincidence of interests; more even than a sentiment of mutual goodwill and readiness for co-operation. The feeling of *unity*, or belonging together, in a nation (or would-be nation), a church, or school, or family, is generally of complex growth. If we take it in a wider than the present and human sense it involves a principle of community binding the living to one another, the living to the dead, and the human to the divine. Its manifestations, in this larger sense, are also threefold: there is the union in social intercourse, with communication, written or spoken, of thoughts and impressions, and participation in active undertakings; there is the more intimate relation of the sexes and parenthood;

who does not, however, approach the subject from exactly my own standpoint); Lewis Farnell on the "Higher Aspects of Greek Religion"; Dean Inge's essay on "Sacraments," in *Contentio Veritatis*; and several articles in *E. R. E.*, especially on "Communion," "Eucharist," and "Sacraments." Also Loisy: *Les Mystères.*

and there is—conceived at least, though its separate operation may have been questioned—the interpenetration of one personality by another, especially by communication of spiritual or quasi-spiritual power.

Now in the region of symbolism and ceremony, to which sacrament in part at least belongs, these three types and manifestations of corporate unity are evident. Gatherings for common ritual and a common meal bind the members of a tribe or church together, whether at the feast after Ramadan, or at a Methodist or Parish tea. Commemoration of the dead is perhaps little better than a survival in our collegiate and civic celebrations, though they do something to keep up continuity of corporate life with a grateful remembrance to those who have gone before. And the actual communication of divine blessing is expected, or at least supposed, to be attainable by prayer and by all the ordinances of religion. If not sacramental, they have a character akin to that of sacrament properly so-called.

But to look for a moment at the means or manifestations of the community of life: we have said that it is possible to regard the communication of life in three ways: (α) as the result of interchange of words or conscious intercourse; (β) as sexual; (γ) as the result of eating, drinking, or inhaling. The second of these suggests marriage on its sacramental side, which will be more appropriately considered among

the Sacraments of Authority or status. With regard to the first and third I would draw attention to the curious paradox—if such it may seem—that to the mind of the Church generally what seems the most material of the means of receiving life from without has generally come to be regarded as the most purely spiritual. True, we have the sacramental value of the spoken word acknowledged in the most sacramental of the Gospels: "The words that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life." And again St. Paul says: "The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink." The ceremonial attending the Eucharist has also always laid stress on the words of consecration. Yet we may look on this exaltation of the homeliest act of life to its great spiritual significance as an additional illustration of the greater appeal to the heart made by symbol than by what *seems* to have no mystery about it. Those who have thought on the subject see equal mystery in the effect of words passing from man to man. But the force of the spoken or written word is only indirectly regarded as sacramental.[1]

(5) These remarks lead to a more special consideration of the Eucharist, as having its germs in primæval yet significant usage, and as setting forth more clearly

[1] Of course the anthropologist will point to a non-symbolic intention in the raw meat feast of the Dionysiac and other mysteries. I would also draw attention to the curious deification of food in some early Indian religions (see *inter alia*, D. Stephen, *Studies in Early Indian Thought*).

than any other institution of the Church both the union of all members into one body and the union of each one with Christ as the Head of the Church and as the inner life of the soul. Of course to say that it had its germs in pre-Christian times does not in the least imply that it was never instituted by Christ, nor adapted to regular and perhaps more significant use by St. Paul. It seems most probable that the solemn occasions of "breaking of bread" in the Gospels, and the significance attached thereto, especially at the "Last Supper," point to certain habitual actions of the Master as presiding at the common board, and sanctioning the subsequent adoption of the sacramental symbols in perpetuity. The Fourth Gospel, while not giving the words of institution, is as we have said, the most sacramental of all, and its words: "My flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed," contain in the most compressed form the doctrine of spiritual communion with Christ by sacramental actions.

The germs, then, of the Eucharist are to be sought in the various symbolical usages by which primitive or civilized peoples, Jews, Hellenes, or others, have pointed to the vital action of building up the body by the consumption of material food as analogous to and as potentially effecting the strengthening of the spirit by an assimilation of power derived from some human or superhuman source. Familiarity with such usages has doubtless modified the various

meanings attached to the sacrament by early Christians of very divers nationalities and in various stages of culture. It might seem irreverent to refer to the cannibalistic efforts to gain over the strength of the enemy by slaying and devouring him, or the crude idea of the savage hunter that the stronger and fiercer the animals he destroys the greater the contribution they may make to his efficiency. But these primitive notions, as also the curious connection between the tribe and its totem animal, point to a dim apprehension of the nexus between the lower and higher forms of life pervading all creation. At the promulgation of Christianity, man did not confound his life with that of his god or gods, but regarded them as possible implanters of fresh life, mental and moral rather than physical, to those who were initiated into their mysteries, or who sought their healing assistance at recognized shrines.

The very early ritual of the Eucharist (in the *Didache*, chap. ix. 10) presents it as a service of thanksgiving, with little if any idea of sacrifice, but primarily a recognition that God who gives to all the necessary food and drink has imparted to the participants "spiritual food and drink through Thy Son," or, again, "knowledge and faith and immortality which Thou hast made known to us by Jesus Thy Child." There is also the expression of Church unity in the words: "As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and gathered together became one,

so let Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy Kingdom." In Ignatius and Justin the Martyr we have more definite reference to the Flesh and Blood of Christ, but the phrases have not become stereotyped: thus Ignatius would regard Faith as Christ's flesh and Love as His blood. To some readers, the meal as described by the *Didache* would hardly seem sacramental at all. But it was a solemnity to which only the baptized were admitted, and by those who consider that material food stood for spiritual faith and knowledge, and also that the celebration was actually potent in keeping the Church together and embodying its most essential beliefs, its sacramental character can scarcely be seriously impugned.

It must always be remembered that the chief name of the Sacrament (Lord's Supper) is significant of its Jewish origin, and that its spiritual associations centre around the great feast of the Jews. "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast: not with the old leaven nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." It would show a curious want of historical appreciation to twist these words of St. Paul into a condemnation of the Eastern as against the Roman custom of celebrating with ordinary bread, or to ground on them any elaborate theory of vicarious sacrifice. All symbolic, and especially sacramental, ritual abounds

with meaning to be drawn out and applied by every devout and imaginative worshipper. St. Paul found no difficulty in assimilating elements of the Passover to that of the Eucharist. He would probably have repudiated any idea of making one a substitute for the other.

In any case the prominence of thanksgiving is interesting, especially as it seems to carry us back to the actual practice of our Lord in His daily meals and habits. Some of the prayers in the *Didache* are like forms of grace after and before meals, and in later Jewish graces we have a reference to the covenant between Jehovah and His people. The great feast of Christendom seems to be joined by links of piety to the ancient recognition of divine favour as shown in the sustentation of human life, and in the activities of mind and heart which, after all, are not independent of a physical source.

Yet the developments in the main ideas and in the ritual of the Eucharist are not to be regarded as mere superfluous accretions. The element of thanksgiving, of recognition of the utter dependence of man on God as on a bountiful giver, is always there; the acknowledgment of all moral and spiritual strength as divine in origin is there likewise; the unity of all mankind, foreshadowed by the unity of the Church, is also adumbrated therein; and the conception of a mutual sacrifice, by which not only the human will submits to the divine, but the divine nature

becomes in a sense subject to humiliation and even suffering in loving service to the human, has at least been shadowed forth here as some Greeks may have seen it striving for expression in the mysteries of Mithras, or of Atys. But while the mysteries of natural religions seem generally to have acquired moral significance by elaborate and conscious interpretation, those of Christianity were, from the first, either moral or meaningless.

The conception of rising by sacramental practice and thought to participation in a divine life implied naturally some doctrine of immortality. In the Early Church, while the expectation of the Second Advent was still strong, that doctrine was complicated with various eschatological theories. But the feeling that the soul which had really entered into communion with God in such a way that it could say of Christ "which *is* our life," must have been far removed from any fears of annihilation. The destruction of the whole sensible frame of things might be contemplated without dismay. The "house of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" was the prospective home of the Christian family which had eaten and drunk at the table of the Lord. In their feast they "show the Lord's death till He come." Yet if their own death should arrive before that event, their hope of a share in the triumph of their Lord was not to be disappointed.

How the chief Sacrament of a Common Life came

to be modified, both in the habitual views of Christian people and in the demands and controversies of Church Councils and theologians, we shall see later on. I pass to those which have to do with the conferring of Orders and Authority.

IV. The chief of these is, of course, the conferring of Holy Orders, or the Ministry of the Church as established by definite ordinances and ceremonies. The other, which I desire to take briefly, and which only falls in part under this head—Marriage—I will consider first.

(6) Marriage is unlike most of the other sacraments in two ways: it is not obligatory on all members of the Christian Church, and it is not essentially Christian, nor even religious in character. The ceremonial attending marriage has, however, been almost universally so elaborate and has so abounded in supposed symbolism—often the survival of forgotten usage—that one cannot wonder at its having become among Christians sacramental in character. It is a curious fact, however, that the ceremonies and symbols which are supposed to stand for something inward and spiritual, though, in a sense, they may and should so stand, have only a very far-fetched relation to the Christian doctrine with which, according to Apostolic teaching, they are to be associated. The real mystery in marriage (if we use the word *mystery* in its highest sense) lies both in the hidden multiplication of self-centred conscious beings from

the union of two, and in the bond of natural affection and dependence resulting between husband and wife, parents and offspring. If it is said that something of the kind is traceable in animal life, it may be replied that only in the higher mammalia, and possibly in some birds, do we find strong and—for a time—enduring family bonds. In the self-sacrificing affection of a mother-lioness for her cubs, or the fidelity of a male elephant to his mate, we are generally agreed in recognizing a spiritual, or at least a super-material, tendency.

Anthropologists have collected masses of information about the ceremonies and rules belonging to betrothal, marriage, and childbirth, some of them apparently based on crude generalizations from experience of various kinds of union, others having no such intelligible basis. The degrees of kinship within which marriage is permissible, and the regulation of marital life—whether polygamous, polyandric, or monogamous—have belonged to the sphere of religion before the era of law, and in this department of life religious and legal rights and obligations have always been closely associated. This was especially the case among the Romans, into whose imperial system Christianity was born. The original Roman patrician marriage was distinctly sacramental, comprising the partaking together by bridegroom and bride of a sacred cake (*confarreatio*). This original form of marriage placed the woman under the *manus* or com-

plete authority of her husband. Henceforth she had no more share in the family rights and duties of her original house. Like the bride addressed in the 45th Psalm, she is practically warned: "Forget . . . thine own people and thy father's house . . . instead of thy fathers thou shalt have children." In these matters, however, as in many others, the Romans found a way of avoiding the severity of their own laws. Other forms of marriage were devised by which a woman did not come under *manus*, and in course of time she came to have practical control over property, while it is hardly necessary to say that the ties of daughter to parents and sister to brothers survived any technical separation, or change in legal status. Still the ceremonial continued to be elaborate and formal, and the power of husband over wife, amounting to repudiation on frivolous grounds—continued, and was often exercised.

The extreme laxity of the marriage tie in upper Roman society at the beginning of our era is a fact to be borne in mind by all students of early Church history. It naturally appears at its worst in the upper circles, where questions of economy did not urge a certain degree of mutual forbearance. Worst of all it shows itself in orientalized families of rank, as that of the Herods, whose relations in this respect were particularly scandalous. The action of the Church against the prevalent laxity is seen in two apparently inconsistent processes: the consecration

of the celibate life and the elevation of marriage to the rank of a sacrament.

The former of these tendencies is ascetic in character, and belongs, in Apostolic times, to the belief in a speedy second Advent of Christ. In later times it sometimes took the form not of an elimination of sexual emotion, but of the direction of that emotion into a particular channel. The idea of the consecrated nun as a bride of Christ and the devotion of adventurous knights to the service of the Virgin Mary may be regarded in the light of emotional aberrations. But where the feelings were kept in check by ecclesiastical or other discipline, the recognition of a place in the world for the unmarried man and the unmarried woman became a decided gain to societies in which circumstances had rendered almost necessary the existence of a celibate element. Such an element might, and often did, invite a spirit of license in men, and a crippled—often dishonoured—life for women. The experience of good work done and noble lives led by men and women, who for some reasons had forsworn or been excluded from a nuptial bond, has modified and enlarged the ordinary view of social duties and privileges. Yet it has done so without precluding the acceptance, as a general principle, of married life, large, or at least considerable, families, and home affections, as the normal conditions of a healthy and happy society.

With regard to Marriage as a sacrament, it is

at first sight startling to find the idea expressed by St. Paul, who avowedly preferred the single life for himself and for all who could rise above mere physical instinct. It might be suggested that the language of Ephesians v. cannot be taken as certainly Pauline, but the figure of a church (not *the* Church) being presented as a bride to Christ seems to enshrine the same idea. In Ephesians, however, whether solely Pauline or not, the relation of husband to wife is worked out according to the metaphor given in Corinthians.[1] The relation should be one of entire self-sacrificing love on both sides, though on the woman's, as we should expect, there is personal subjection, not however of a kind that could ever be provocative or galling. The same conception is found in the marriage of the Lamb to the Holy City in the Apocalypse.

With these examples it may seem surprising that we find so little in the earliest Christian literature of any distinctive ceremonies in Christian marriage. As a good authority has stated: "There is not a single feature in the marriage services of the Christian communities that cannot be traced back to the *sponsalia*, or to the nuptial ceremonies, of the Roman Empire." [2] Purely civil marriages were not regarded as invalid till comparatively late. By the Council

[1] Loisy, in work already quoted, compares this with the marriage of the God in various mysteries.

[2] W. M. Foley, *apud E. R. E.*

of Trent, matrimonial laws were carefully laid down and the sacramental nature of the institution asserted.

The principle of the indissolubility of marriage did not always make for purity or upright dealing during the Middle Ages, seeing that in the absence of divorce, annulments *ab initio* on ground of consanguinity or previous betrothal were often very easy to obtain. Whether or no the question of possibility of permanent separation is incompatible with the sacramental character of the marriage ceremony, or whether the knotty problems of the present day should be settled by an appeal to the Christian conscience, to enlightened expediency, or to any other forum can hardly be discussed within our present limits.[1]

(7) The Sacrament of Orders, where recognized, has for its special mark the conferring of authority and status of a special kind—in the Church rather than in civil society. It might be taken to include the Coronation of a king or queen, which may be regarded as semi-sacerdotal in character (and did, indeed, at one time admit to the performance of certain Christian ritual). In fact, the idea of political

[1] It is certainly inconsistent with the idea of Christian marriage that the relation should be entered upon without a recognition, by both parties, of the permanence and seriousness of the obligations involved. The only conditions under which the sacramental idea may be maintained and a breach of union sanctioned are those in which the essential character of the union has never existed or has disappeared. But as an unfrocked priest is priest no longer, may not a lawfully divorced couple cease to be man and wife ?

as of spiritual authority vested in a person through a symbolic process, which marks from that moment a changed attitude in his relations and responsibilities and the obligation of others towards him, makes a Coronation service distinctly sacramental. Orders in general, however, as sacramentally conferred, are supposed to belong to bishops, priests, and deacons, and perhaps to some minor Orders recognized in various churches.

The method in which ecclesiastical officers have been appointed by popular election, by the civil authority, or by superior officers in the Church, does not affect the sacramental character of their institution. The rite, which is necessary before they can finally enter on their duties, must be purely ecclesiastical, and the ecclesiastical *hand*—always the symbol of authority—conveys the episcopal, priestly, or diaconal status respectively to the ordinand.

A history of the growth of the Christian ministry, apart from its position in the sacramental system of the Church, would be a work requiring much labour and erudition, and is happily not required in this place. Readers may still be referred to Dr. Lightfoot's epoch-making essay published with his commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians, which has been developed and elucidated rather than superseded by later writers, especially in the essays by Dr. C. H. Turner, Dr. Armytage Robinson, and others included in Professor Swete's last book.[1] It

[1] *The Early Christian Ministry*, compiled by H. B. Swete.

seems to be fairly agreed that the distinction between bishops and presbyters was of gradual growth, that an enormous stride in the power of bishops was made early in the second century, and that recognition of sacerdotal functions as exercised by ordained persons, rather than as vested in the whole Christian community, is first clearly expressed by Tertullian (lived *circa* 160–240). Lightfoot shows how to Ignatius (d. *circa* 110) (admitting only his genuine writings) episcopacy is chiefly valued as constituting a *centre of unity* in the congregation; to Irenæus (two generations later) the bishop is primarily the *depositary of Apostolic tradition*; but to Cyprian (d. 258) he is the *vicegerent of Christ*, the indispensable channel of divine grace. Metaphors from the Aaronic priesthood were at first, of course, metaphors only. It might be expected that a *cursus honorum* like that familiar in the political system, should make its way in the ecclesiastical. But the new emphasis on the *sacerdotium* of Christian presbyters is perhaps to be connected with the new position which in the fourth and following centuries they were beginning to occupy as parish priests. "It was the necessity of the regular administration of the Eucharist which dictated the commencement of the parochial system." [1]

Two important points have to be observed in the

[1] Dr. C. H. Turner, on the Organization of the Christian Church, *Cambridge Mediæval History*, vol. i, chap. vi.

sacramental system, which will concern us again in the next chapter. There is the distinction which had to be made between the circumstances and the general intention in the performance of a sacrament. Thus it became sometimes necessary to admit status given in spite of irregularity in baptismal form, or in qualifications of an ordainer. Still more important (in a different direction) is the principle that the person of the official who performs a sacred action is of no importance in determining its validity and subsequent recognition. If some laxity had not been allowed in these respects, order and justice would both have gone to the winds, and persons baptized by wicked men, or ordained by heretical bishops, would have suffered unmerited distress. This latter principle was sometimes ignored in later times—as when sacraments performed by simoniacal priests were pronounced invalid. But, as a rule, the merciful and—we may say—the common-sense idea prevailed.

It will have been seen that the Sacraments of Initiation, of Purification, of Common Life, and of Authority, whether they be taken as two, as three, as seven, or as more numerous, are closely related one to another. Without formal entry, and possible recovery in case of a lapse, the common life cannot be lived at all. Without authority recognized in some quarter or other the conditions of that life cannot be maintained. But if "the life is more than meat and the body than raiment," it is only by an

intimate connection with the thing signified that the significant actions continued in sacramental use can find any *raison d'être*. Historically they have generally meant more than what they have primarily stood for, or rather they have come to stand for more, and sometimes for much with which they had originally no connection. It is of their essence that they should be beyond the reach of adequate verbal definition. Yet such definition they have been compelled to accept in the interests both of churches and of states. These attempts at expression and definition, with its results on the history of thought and of institution, will concern us in the following chapters.

CHAPTER V

CONTROVERSIES AND AUTHORITATIVE DECISIONS (PRE-REFORMATION)

Perhaps most people who have thought and read about the great factors in human history, especially on their moral and spiritual side, may be ready to agree that a religion without sacraments, or at least some sacramental element, must be inadequate to the needs of any community. Not only must it be lacking in appeal to the imagination, to the feelings of family and racial unity, and to our sense of the continuity of the present with the past; it is likely to fail more completely still in preserving within the range of consciousness the sense of a Divine Life pervading all nature and all human souls. True, it is on a sacramental or quasi-sacramental side that we find many weakening tendencies which reformers, both religious and irreligious, are ever striving to avert: puerile superstition, dread of letting the light of truth into dark places, separation of the spheres of morals and of religious obligations. But such aberrations belong to the abuses of a sacramental

system rather than to the fact of its existence. They show a muddle-headed mixture of notions as to material and spiritual, temporal and eternal, rather than an excessive devotion to the spiritual and eternal in life and beyond it, or an over-eagerness to attain to some kind of experience by which what we loosely call the higher and the lower may be brought into unity, whether in speculation or in action.

Matthew Arnold, in contrasting the directness of appeal made by religion to the consciousness, with the pseudo-philosophy of unphilosophical theologians, makes the remark that religion must be something about which there is no puzzle. In a sense this is perfectly true. There are puzzles enough in the lives of all of us to make us desire clearness of vision and sureness of fact in the paths along which we daily tread, paths which, unless they lead to a goal that seems worth pursuing, are both futile and fatiguing. But the light which we desire has been frequently obscured more by the pretentions of pseudo-science than by the necessary limitations of human powers. This applies, above all other departments of religious thought and controversy, to the disputations and decisions regarding the sacraments.

It would, of course, be presumptuous and foolish to accuse all writers on these subjects of obscurantism, or of intellectual arrogance. Man can never learn the limits of his faculties except by using them until they fail. The great thing that those who are in

earnest in the search for truth must require is the faculty of discerning where and how they have failed. As I hope to show later on, the strongest and boldest minds have, generally speaking, though not invariably, been the readiest to acknowledge their own limitations. Such minds have three courses open: To discard the pursuit of truth altogether, and adopt an attitude of pure scepticism; to make use of "broken lights" and suggestive ideas without trying to build up a positive science on the basis of the symbolic and subjective; or to fall back on authority as handed down by respected teachers, recognized bodies of judges, or traditions preserved in literary form. Of course many persons at various periods of their life, or under different circumstances, adopt partially attitudes of scepticism, of mysticism, or of unreasoning orthodoxy. The deplorable thing is seen when they fall into conflict, and each exaggerates the view taken by his own temperament or party.

The field of religious authority was very different in the pagan and in the Christian world. The enforcement of certain ritual observance has generally been part of the necessary condition of belonging either to a civilized or an uncivilized community. But belief attached to ritual has generally been left vague. The Romans punished rites which were, or at least were supposed to be, immoral in tendency. They also discouraged such as were clearly of foreign origin and might loosen the national tie, although, as is

well known, the extension of the Roman world naturally led to an enlargement of its pantheon. The Mysteries already spoken of became widespread and popular, but whatever doctrine existed as to their significance was not, apparently, much systematized in the instruction of neophytes, though a certain body of lore may have been retained by the Priests of Isis and similar sacred bodies. It is well known that Plato, *if* he had had opportunity, would have sought to impart to younger citizens worthy ideas of the gods, but it does not appear that he would have given instruction in connection with ritual. In the Jewish feasts we have good instances of belief as to the history, and especially the divine guidance of their people explained in answer to the children's question: "What mean ye by this rite?" This going back to the origin for explanation is, of course, always observed in the celebration of the Eucharist (though it is not clear from St. Paul's account in 1 Corinthians that the history was recited at every meeting).[1] But the exact significance of the ordinance and the relation of each part to the whole is not given in any but a general way, capable of practically the same, but not an entirely identical meaning to all participants.

It is with this rite—the Eucharistic—as the chief and centre of the whole sacramental system that the Church had to deal. But apparently it was not for

[1] Of course it stands in most of the early liturgies.

several centuries that exact definition was applied to it, and that we have a minute application of words to things. We have already noticed what it was from the beginning, and must always be first and foremost: the chief of the Sacraments of a Divine and Common Life. But from a long period it seems as if the minds of believers might range pretty freely among the ideas it suggested: the strengthening of the soul against sin; the sacrifice of Christ for mankind; the unity of all participants in one family; thankfulness for the fruits of the earth; perhaps as much as anything, the hope of immortality—without any concentrated attention to the meaning that may or might be attached to the words: "This is my Body"; or the effect that might be produced in the elements themselves by the prayer of consecration. It is not, of course, to be said that the Church in these early times left the individual to formulate his own faith: but the attention of Church leaders had mainly been concentrated on the more entirely theological doctrine of Christianity as embodied, or to be embodied, in creeds and formulæ. Some of the leading terms used in the sacramentarian definitions, especially that of *Substance* and *Body* had become familiar, at least to the ear, in the Christological controversies before they became characteristic of the sacramental. As to ordinary people who did not study theology (though in early times, we must remember, all educated Christians were interested in

theological questions, and there was no hard and fast line between theology and philosophy), their notions were probably formed to a large extent by the language of devotion, while many of the early liturgists were leaders in ecclesiastical thought, and thus bridged over some differences between popular and official religion.

We can hardly say, however, that before synods and councils took the cause in hand, there was no recognized and perpetuated doctrine of the Eucharist or of the other sacraments. Some teachers of recognized reputation (many of whom had been canonized) had written treatises or preached sermons which might safely be quoted as authoritative. The modern reader finds some of these more spiritual or more material in tone. But they serve rather to provide subjects for later decisions than to pronounce between opposing views. Some—notably St. Augustine—might be afterwards quoted on opposite sides by rival controversialists.

Meantime there was growing up a difference of mental and spiritual outlook which we might at first sight distinguish as Greek and Latin, though it must never be forgotten that Byzantium had Roman as well as Greek antecedents, and that though the Greek Church never embraced Western scholasticism, it became too dependent on authority to follow the lead of the mystic and symbolic thinkers who seem to us the spiritual and Christianized descendants of

Greek philosophy, and especially of Plato. I will treat in the next chapter the sacramental view of life, especially as set forth by Dionysius the Areopagite, John the Scot (Erigena), and some of their Western followers. In dealing with sacrament from the point of view of authority, I will take up briefly some of the chief points at issue as illustrated in (1) the fourth-century Fathers; (2) the Berengarian controversy; (3) the Council of the Lateran (1215); (4) the epoch-making work of Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274); (5) the Council of Florence (1439), and the Council of Trent (1545–63).

(1) Even before the fourth century a certain phraseology had become current which suggests later doctrine as to the Eucharist, and in particular the addition of a spiritual character to the material elements. They are thought of as symbol, but not (as the commentators say) as *purely* symbolical. It will be seen later on that the use of the word *symbol* in a disparaging sense begs the whole question as to the real effect of reception by the communicant. It is naturally in Alexandria, and especially in Clement, Origen, and their school that we find the highly spiritualized and allegorized conception of the feast as an inward apprehension of the life-giving words and teaching of Christ, though the words *holy* and *sanctifying* are applied by Origen to the consecrated bread.[1]

[1] Crawley, *apud E. R. E.*; his article on "Eucharist" is very comprehensive and searching.

It is, apparently, in Cyril of Jerusalem (*circa* A.D. 348) that we first find the expression of a *change* (μεταβόλη) in the elements on consecration. It is, however, not clear whether the change was regarded as independent of the partaker of the sacrament. In fact, the word *change* as we use it is often without objective significance (if this is not a paradoxical expression). The view from my window may be changed for me as I feel more or less interested in the objects I can see; though they may be there all the time. Still the idea of a change naturally led on to the mediæval conception of something that we might call objective. Gregory of Nyssa worked out the same, or a similar, idea in connection with the Incarnation. The human Christ took food, which, when He digested it, was *changed* into His body. Here, however, we seem to have come into an allegorical atmosphere. In the West, Ambrose used the word *transfigure* (in carnem transfigurantur). Augustine[1] seems to avoid the material consequences of such expressions when he says: "Aliud videtur, aliud intelligitur; effecti membri ejus, simul quod accipimus;" here the *change*, a spiritual one, is in the worshipper, not the elements. The idea of a union effected among Christians by their joining in visible signs and sacraments is emphasized in his theology. The thought of actual mastication and

[1] See here and all through quotations in Harnack's *History of Dogma*, vols. v and vi.

digestion, on the part of communicants, of the actual body of Christ seems not inconsistent with the "transformation" view, but one which a refined taste would generally repudiate. Gradually during this time the sacrificial side of the sacrament was coming more into consideration, and leading to the separation of the Mass from the Communion. Frequent presence at Mass, with rare participation in Communion, and along with this change the practice of Masses with special objects, as for the souls of the dead, made a transformation in the religious habits of the people. It had, of course, the important disciplinary effect of the periodical (often only annual) self-examination preparatory to Communion. But it is the doctrinal side of the Eucharist with which we are chiefly now concerned.

(2) The Berengarian controversy centres on what may seem a remote question: granted that the consecrated elements, actually or by pregnant metaphor, have been transformed into the Body of Christ, is that the same actual body that was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered death, and ascended into Heaven? Granting the very crude hypothesis of the terrestrial and celestial regions held through the earlier part of the Middle Ages, the difficulty remains that body as body can only occupy one area in space at one time, therefore the consecrated and the risen body can hardly be regarded as identical. This

strange question actually seemed to need treatment by our English Reformers, and a note unintelligible to all but historical students has been appended to our English Communion Service as an argument against Transubstantiation and the adoration of the bread and wine.

The Berengarian controversy is, so to speak, the second heat of a conflict, the first having been waged between Paschasius Radbertus, abbot of Corbie (844–51), and the monk Ratramnus. Paschasius [1] had written a treatise asserting strongly that the historical and the sacramental body of Christ were one and the same. He had to deal with the question as to the participation of unbelievers in the Eucharist, and came to the conclusion that such did participate in the sacrament, though not in its efficacy. The subject proved to be one of great general interest, partly, one would suspect, from the greater dignity and importance that Paschasius and his views would give to the hierarchical order. The treatise had been dedicated to the Emperor Charles the Bald, who seems to have been generally honoured as a patron of learning. The Emperor made an appeal to a learned monk, Ratramnus, on two questions: whether the consecrated elements contain a hidden power recognized by faith and not by sight. To this Ratramnus assented. The second question was as to the identity of the risen body of Christ with the

[1] Migne, *P. L.*, cxx. pp. 1267, 1350.

sacramental. In answer to this question,[1] Ratramnus asserts strongly sacramental views: "The body and blood of Christ, which are in the Church received by the mouth of the faithful, are figures according to visible form, but according to their invisible substances, that is, by the power of the Divine Word, they are in truth the body and blood of Christ." "But," he goes on to say, "What the Church celebrates is the body and blood of Christ, but as it were a pledge, an image"; "a pledge and an image have reference not to themselves, but to something else."

The days of strict discipline in matters of sacramental opinion were, however, yet to come. It was not till the time of Hildebrand that the representative of the doctrine that the Eucharist is primarily a pledge was identified and persecuted in the person of Berengar, Director of the Cathedral School at Tours.

The link between the two controversies is found in a thinker of much wider range, John Scotus Erigena. Strange to say, he is cited and approved by Berengar and condemned by his opponents, though so far as we know he had written no special treatise on the subject It seems most probable that for a time the treatise by Ratramnus had passed as his. In any case, the view of Scotus, as we shall see in the next chapter, is nearer to that of Berengarius, though his thoughts soar aloft over both camps.

[1] Migne, *P. L.*, cxxi. p. 103 *seq.*

Berengarius reasoned against the supposition of *transmutation* (the term *transubstantiation* had not yet been invented). He believes in a certain *conversio* in the bread and wine, but only in so far as a new element is added to the visible, by which they become a pledge, and the whole Christ can be received into the inner man. Pope Nicolas II and, after him, Gregory VII were both inclined to be lenient, but Berengarius was finally forced, in a synod held 1079, to acknowledge the consecrated elements as "substantialiter conversa in veram et propriam et vivifactricem carnem et sanguinem J. C. et post consecrationem esse verum corpus Christi, quod natum est de virgine . . . non tantum per signum et virtutem sacramenti sed in proprietate naturæ et veritate substantiæ."

(3) The Council of the Lateran (1215) forms, in secular history, the last scene in the great tragedy of the Albigensian Crusade, with the necessary collapse of a specially Provençal civilization as represented in the rule of the Raymonds of Toulouse. The doctrinal assertion of sacramental essence affected by Pope Innocent III is in part a condemnation of the anti-sacerdotal tenets held by at least one section of the Albigenses, who seem to have derived from the Bogomiles of the Balkan States the conception of sacramental efficacy as dependent on the personal holiness of the officiating priest. The Lateran Council, however, goes further, in declaring that by consecra-

tion the bread and wine are *transubstantiated* into the body and blood of Christ. Some scholars have hesitated to take this decision as final, without more explanation as to the *accidents* or qualities which adhere to the elements both before and after consecration. There can be little doubt, however, that the Roman Catholic doctrine from this date is both positive and negative: that the elements have become the Body and Blood, and that there remains in them nothing real (though there may be appearance) which has not undergone this change.[1]

(4) The great work of St. Thomas Aquinas (1227–74) in defining Church doctrine in this and other departments, and in giving to the whole system a neo-Aristotelian basis is, of course, of the highest importance, especially as he draws out more fully than it had been conceived before the difference between substance and accident. But in another sphere his influence was weighty and permanent, that of Christian devotion. It was in the latter part of the thirteenth century that the Festival of Corpus Christi became popular (founded 1264), and the ceremonial, especially the hymnody which became attached to this feast, reached the hearts and minds of many to whom the conception of substance and accident cannot have come with much force. A

[1] See Franzelin, *Tractatus de Eucharistæ Sacramento*, especially p. 199.

churchman may paraphrase the old comparison between the relative importance of laws and songs into: "Let who will make the Articles and Canons so long as I can choose the hymns." The hymn of Aquinas, "Tantum ergo Sacramentum," has become a classic.[1] Possibly its popularity is more due to the music which has accompanied it than to the actual words, as later another hymn of the same character, "Ave verum corpus natum," when sung to Mozart's setting, can hardly be heard unmoved by "heathen, Turk, or Jew," and must have attuned the minds of many to the mystery therein enshrined.

(5) The Council of 1439 was the final (and, as events proved, a futile) attempt to unite the Churches of East and West in order to present a united front to the rapidly advancing power of the Turks. With regard to the main theological difference between East and West (the *filioque* clause in the Creed), the Greek delegates as before at Lyons gave way, but their surrender was not accepted at home, and the result was disastrous. The Council of Florence is only mentioned here as the one in which the doctrine of Transubstantiation was distinctly asserted and

[1] It has the same beginning, "Pange lingua gloriosi," as a hymn of the sixth century, but is best known from its fifth verse:

"Tantum ergo sacramentum veneremur cernui
et antiquum documentum novo cedat ritui
præstet fides supplementum sensuum defectui."

accepted by both Eastern and Western Churches. There seems to have been no objection in Constantinople to this agreement, as there had been to the former. The term "transubstantio" had already been translated into μετουσίωσις, which possibly, to men who heard it, bore a less harsh meaning. In any case, the question as to a change in the elements has never found a permanent place in the differences between Greek and Roman Churches. The comparatively insignificant difference in ritual (the use of leavened or of unleavened bread) was on that occasion left open.

(6) The definitions laid down at the Council of Trent were bound to be uncompromising, though great hopes had been once raised by Catholic Reformers, of a united and purified Church. Without going into detail as to the futile attempts to obtain the presence and adhesion of English and of German reformed delegates, we may take the whole work of the Council as reconstructive, in so much as it set up a marvellously strong and in most respects more orderly structure than that of the Middle Ages. But on the other hand it seems frankly uncompromising as to the chief points, both of doctrine and of ritual, that the Mediæval Church had held and elaborated. True, one point touching the sacraments remained for a time undecided: the granting of the cup to the laity. But the preservation of the miracle of the Mass was asserted in unmistakable

terms. Put most briefly, in Canon I (Thirteenth Session) it runs: "If any one shall deny that in the Sacrament of the most Holy Eucharist there is contained truly, really, and substantially, the Body and Blood along with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore the Whole Christ; but shall say that the Presence is symbolical, or is a figure: let him be anathema." Other canons go on to condemn the opinion that the consecration does not affect *all* of the elements permanently, or that Christ in the Eucharist is not to be especially venerated, nor the sacrament reserved, or that the consumption is purely spiritual, or that faith, without sacramental confession, is sufficient to prepare for participation. In the explanatory decrees the importance of the Real Presence is set forth in such a way that it would seem to be the groundwork of the whole sacramental system. But there is, of course, no distinction made between the doctrine that Christ manifests Himself to the believer in the sacrament, and that of a miracle worked in the sensible objects through which the manifestation takes place.

To the historian as to the practical man, the question as to what can or cannot be achieved by authoritative pronouncement on the subject of sacrament and sacramental observance is by no means an easy one. To have any effect at all, one would suppose there must be an appeal both to feeling and to good sense. Yet very much of the legislative and prohibi-

tive measures taken to secure a certain habitual action in these matters has been conceived in cold blood and justified by fallacious reasoning. So far as practice goes, the government of a church, and sometimes (especially where questions of danger to public order come in) of a state, is bound to aim at regularity, decency, and spiritual education. Where *no* authority is acknowledged, sacramental and symbolic observance tends to promote superstition, want of proportion in the moral standard, and effusive —it may be licentious—emotionalism. But it is indeed a hard problem so to arrange our laws that the authority is put into the hands of those who have the breadth of mind and the clearness of vision to exercise it aright. Every student of the Middle Ages is struck by the curious combinations in societies and in individual characters of grovelling superstition and lofty imaginings. As already suggested, we could gather little as to the religious feelings and even the habitual religious thought of a society if we studied only its formularies of belief and the means by which they have been imposed. With an extravagant regard for such material objects as have been taken as sign and symbol of spiritual realities, we often find a faith—nourished on sacramental observance—by which the spiritual alone is regarded as real, permanent, and in close touch with one's very self. This would suggest that behind—sometimes helped, sometimes hindered by authoritative tra-

ditions and decrees—there ever remains in some souls a full recognition of the sacramental view of life, as the only view compatible with the demands both of right reason and of pure religious feeling.

CHAPTER VI

THE SACRAMENTAL VIEW OF LIFE

In reviewing the means by which the Mediæval Church endeavoured to impress on all its members not only a strict conformity to regulation of discipline and worship but also a particular way in which ecclesiastical ritual should be interpreted and meditated upon by all the clergy and the laity, we are struck at once by the general success of the methods followed, and by the concurrent or sometimes opponent tendencies which led ultimately to their limitation, reinterpretation, frequent rejection. The Middle Ages are full of paradoxes (they would hardly have been called *Middle Ages* if it had been otherwise). We are told by Lord Bryce that they were essentially unpolitical; yet they saw the birth of some of the best specimens of political organizations known to the world. They were in a sense non-legal; or certainly our idea and that of the ancients on law in general seem more akin to one another than either to that of feudal law, yet in another sense all mediæval life was riddled with law or laws. More remarkably

still do they impress us as intensely materialistic and boldly spiritual in tone and outlook. Both individual characters and intellectual systems, as well as religious ideas and habits, might be cited with equal force on both sides of this question. It is in the sacraments of the Church that both qualities are most conspicuously exemplified. What more materialistic than the supposition that a few words could effect a radical change in material products ? (though of course the material connotation of the word *substance* belongs to us and not to the Mediævalists). What more purely spiritual than the aspirations after union with God and charity towards man found in all the best-known Catholic manuals ? What more crudely anthropomorphic than the practices of bargains made with God and His Saints, compositions for sins, indulgences as popularly understood ? What more elevated than Dante's conception of a Divine Love moving the sun and the other stars—a love set forth most visibly and forcibly in the chief sacrament of the Church ?

The main cause of these contrasts may be said to coincide with what we noted at the outset of our inquiry : that sacraments belong to religion both on its institutional and public and on its devotional and personal side. The intellectual element of religion, which Baron von Hügel would place between the two, seems to favour one or the other side. The Aristotelian, as interpreted and developed by Aquinas

(however far Aristotle, or even Aquinas, may have been from materialism), favoured the less entirely spiritual mind which is reflected in the favourite devotional writers of the Middle Ages. Platonism, or rather neo-Platonism, filtered down through Alexandrian Judaism or the late Athenian school of Proclus, was more attractive and nutritive to such minds as held man's highest life to consist in union with God, such union being more forcibly expressed in symbol than in ordinary human language, except in so far as all language is also, in a sense, symbolical.

The symbolic or mystic views of the Divine and Human Nature which came to take a fast grip on mediæval thought and feeling were developed by the great pseudonymous philosopher whose personality is never likely to be discovered, Dionysius the Areopagite. It is now generally, I think, supposed by experts that he lived during the fifth century, and was probably a contemporary of Proclus, the neo-Platonic teacher of Athens. His work was thoroughly assimilated and in great part translated and commented on by a noted man, already mentioned in connection with the Eucharistic controversy of Berengarius, John Scotus Erigena. The treatises of Dionysius had been presented by a Byzantine emperor to Lewis the Pious, son of Charlemagne, and in all probability it was the chance of studying them that tempted the Irish scholar to the Western Court, where learning was at that time appreciated. But though

Scotus, in after years, perhaps because bolder and more thoroughgoing than his master, fell under ecclesiastical censure, Dionysius remained a pillar of the Church, as well as a source of inspiration to all devoutly poetic souls. We may here take the philosophic ideas of the two together, especially in their relation to sacramental doctrine and practice.

It is quite possible to argue *either* that mystic theology (especially the Dionysian) is opposed to sacramentalism, *or* that it places the sacraments in a higher place than any other system. The main theological idea of these Mystics is that God is not to be understood nor defined by man. We may say that He is *not* this nor that, but never that He *is* this rather than anything else. How, then, can man ever reach to anything of a comprehension of the Divine Being or to life-giving communion with God? Not by verbal definitions, but by significant symbols, and by whatsoever means enable him to participate in the Divine Nature. For all knowledge, as all love, consists in some kind of identification of the mind which knows and the knowledge it possesses—of the person who loves and the object of his love. This might seem mere jugglery if there were not behind it the belief that Reality is not, by us, to be proved from sensible perceptions and their relations to one another whether in the percipient mind or in what it posits outside itself, but that whatever reality may be predicated of ourselves or

of our conceptions is due to participation in the Unknowable yet not Unattainable One. Not unattainable, these teachers would say, in that even the human spirit is able to ascend to divinity. As Scotus says, in commenting on Dionysius:[1] "The Holy Trinity is itself our deification; for it deifies our nature, carrying it back by sensible symbols to the height of the angelic nature, and making it divine in those who beyond all else pass into God himself. The Trinity is our τελεαρχία, that is, the beginning of our most perfect purification and sanctification. It is the first and supreme hierarchy For there is no order in heaven or on earth, that is in this public city of ours, which has been established in the worship of the One True God, by a reasonable and intelligible plan, that is, according to the nature of men and of angels: no order, I say, which does not proceed from the Trinity, and does not go forth thence from the highest to the lowest or summon back from the lowest to the highest." "The Trinity[2] manifests to us virtues (powers) in figures and forms suitable to our weakness, that by them, as it were by a ladder, the grace of God assisting us, we come, equal to the angels, to the simple and pure vision of incommunicable truth. Thus by the deeds of the patriarchs, the parables of the Gospels, the miracles which the Lord

[1] *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 122, p. 142. *Super Hierarchiam Cœlestem*, cap. i, p. 142, in *P. L.* 122.

[2] *Or* the Deification (*ipsa*). I have transposed parts of this sentence in order to present what seems to me its meaning.

performed when in the flesh, the visible sacraments of the new law, which by the Lord Himself were begun and sanctified, and which were frequented and increased by the holy apostles, we mount the stairs of action and of knowledge." Again (a page earlier): "Behold beautifully and how clearly he (Dionysius) declares that this visible Eucharist, which daily the priests of the Church at the altar make (*conficiunt*) from the sensible material of bread and wine, and which they corporally receive as so made and sanctified, is the typical similitude of Jesus whom by faith we taste with the mind only (*solo intellectu gustamus*), that is apprehend mentally (*intelligimus*) and take into the inward parts of our body for our salvation and spiritual growth, and ineffable deification." Again, in his *Commentary on St. John's Gospel*, Scotus says: "He is the one and only mystic Lamb, in whom figuratively the people of Israel every year sacrificed a lamb for each household at the Paschal season. And we, who after His incarnation and passion and resurrection believe in Him, and—so far as it is possible for us—comprehend His mysteries do spiritually sacrifice Him, and intellectually (or mentally) by the mind (or thoughts) but not with the teeth, do eat Him."

These passages from Dionysius and Scotus are mostly phrased in language which for us is unfamiliar, yet they and others of like tenor set forth what I have called the sacramental view of life in opposition

to what might be styled the sacerdotal or sacramentarian view of the Church and its ordinances which prevailed all through the Middle Ages. The last passages quoted show very clearly why Scotus should have been censured as a precursor of Berengarius, even if he never wrote a special treatise on the topic as to which Berengarius was condemned, for it is not, he says, by the teeth of men (as Berengarius was forced to assert) that the body of the Lord is broken and ground. Another interesting point is that Dionysius and Scotus are far from limiting the number of the sacraments, or—in their general teaching—from drawing a hard and fast line between sacraments and other symbolical acts. Dionysius reckons as *mysteria* the consecration (which he would allow to be ordination) of a monk, and the anointing of the body of a dead Christian. In fact, the tendency of their doctrine is not to level down all sacrament to what is depreciatingly called "mere symbol," but rather to level up all symbol to the plane of the sacramental. This last statement may seem to require further consideration.

The result of all attempts, all the world over, to arrive by thinking and by observation of ourselves and our surroundings at a clear conception of the highest object or objects of contemplation and of affection has been and must be unsatisfactory. It is not an assumption of any particular philosophic school, still less a pessimistic cry of despairing humanity,

that God is unknowable. Neither the self nor the sensible world is knowable to us except in relations which we cannot apply to the Supreme Unity, apart from which neither self nor nature can be ever supposed to have any being at all. Yet from the religious standpoint, our souls with their capacities for good and evil, and all nature with its apparently conflicting forces, owe what they have of reality to the one eternal Being, "not far from any one of us," though infinitely transcending our powers of comprehension and definition. What virtue we may have is possessed by us through participation in the Divine Nature. What beauty and order we see around us can be ascribed to what we may call the working of Divine Power. What is evil or ugly is to be so regarded because of its absence from the field wherein that power acts. The activity or the existence of such power cannot be proved by our reasoning faculties. Our minds may devise *names* for God, even suggesting opposite qualities, but none of them is to be pressed as giving more than a suggestion of reality. As Dionysius[1] says: "He is neither soul nor mind; He has neither imagination nor opinion nor word nor thought: nor is He word or thought; He uttereth no word and thinketh no thought; neither is He number nor order nor greatness nor littleness nor

[1] *De Mystica Theologia*, chap. v. I follow my own translation in the chapter on *the Unknown God*, where further treatment of the subject will be found, in my *Study of John the Scot.*

equality nor inequality nor likeness nor difference; He standeth not nor moveth He; neither doth He take rest; He hath not power nor is He power nor light; He liveth not neither is He life; He is not being nor eternity nor time; neither is He within touch of reason; He is not skill nor is He truth; nor dominion, nor wisdom; neither one nor unity nor divinity nor goodness nor yet spirit as we know it;[1] neither sonship nor fatherhood, nor anything that is known to us or to any other beings; neither is He of things that are, nor of them that are not; neither do the things that are know Him in that He is, nor doth He know the things that are in that they are; neither doth any word pertain to Him nor name nor thought; He is neither darkness nor light, neither error nor truth; neither is there for Him any place or any removal; for when we place or when we remove these things that come after Him we do not so with Him; for the perfect and unifying Cause is beyond any place, and the excellent simplicity withdrawn from all things is beyond any taking away and stands apart from all things."

The words "perfect and unifying Cause" seem to give a kind of affirmation as opposed to the great series of negations—Dionysius and his followers hold that though we should not say of God that He *is*

[1] *Or* "spirit that might know us?" There is sometimes a curious sliding from masculine to feminine gender, though this may be due to copyists' errors.

this or that, we may say that He is the source of all that stands for strength, wisdom, virtue, and unity. Hence we are justified in using certain terms as *names* of God, if we remember that they are but names, and only to be employed as a concession to our feeble faculties, thus we may say—with Scotus—that God is *more than good*, *more than wise*, and the like. We seem to have Tennyson's idea :

> They are but broken lights of Thee
> And Thou, O Lord, art more than they,

except that Scotus is not thinking of *Systems* as generally understood, but of our ordinary affirmations and negations in the formation of conceptions as to our general environment.

Passages like that above translated may seem on the one hand to remove God to an immeasurable distance from Nature and from man, but on the other hand to bring Him very close. Here we may cite (as certainly connected with the sacramental idea) the expressions used by philosophers of this type about the theophanies. The invisible God may be said to be revealed to man so that man sees Him in a theophany ; that is, as Moses saw " His Glory," but not Himself. And these are again closely connected with the spiritual experience of the individual soul. For the divine vision is given to each according to his spiritual capacity. Thus Scotus :[1] " ' In my

[1] *De Divisione Naturæ L.*, 8 *seq.*

Father's house are many mansions,' calling Himself the House of the Father, which, as it is one and the same, He dwells in without change, but in many ways He is seen by those to whom it is granted to dwell in Him. For each one, as we have said, possesses a knowledge (or cognition : *notitia*) in himself, according to the grace given to him. As many, then, as make up the body of the chosen, so many are the mansions. As the number of sanctified souls, such is the possession of the theophanies . . . as Maximus says : as far as the soul of man arises by love, so far does the Divine Wisdom descend by pity ! And this is the cause of all virtues and of all substance. Every theophany, then, that is every virtue, both in this life, in which it has its beginning in those who are worthy, and in the life to come, where they will attain to the perfection of divine blessedness, is formed not outside themselves but in themselves, and both from God and from themselves." And again quoting Maximus, he adds : " ' Whatsoever the mind has been able to comprehend, that it becomes ' ; so far, then, as the soul comprehends virtue, in that degree it becomes virtue."

A complaint may here be made that the abstract and the concrete are inextricably confused, but the confusion is not in the minds of philosophers who see the abstract in the concrete, and to whom the concrete is what it is in virtue of the abstract.

One reason, perhaps, why the Dionysian doctrine

was approved by the constituted authorities of the Mediæval Church was that in spite of its super-mundane character, it implied a definite ecclesiastical order. The hierarchy on earth corresponds to the celestial hierarchy of Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Virtues, Powers, Principalities. Archangels, Angels. The analogy is not worked out by Dionysius in detail with regard to the several orders in the Church, though the ceremonial assigned to baptism, the Eucharist, the dedication of altars, etc., has mystic meanings attached, and the chief order is that of the ἱεράρχης, the second of the ἱερεύς, the third of the λειτοῦργός. Some of the particular sacramental rules followed (*e.g.* the presence of *one* sponsor in baptism) are of great interest from the antiquarian point of view. On the religious side, one feels that the mind of the mystic is seeking for symbols of eternal truth which he would probably have derived from any kind of ritual to which he had been accustomed.

It has often been remarked that the line of demarcation between saints and heresiarchs has sometimes been drawn in early times in what may seem a rather capricious fashion. That line is a kind of causeway over the lake of mysticism. A bold thinker, with intense convictions, such as John the Scot, may utter his mind in such a way as to conflict with statements categorically set forth by authority, and therefore receive ecclesiastical censure. Another thinker, who

held approximately the same opinions, might express them in words which were not likely to arouse opposition. Possibly the tendency of wayward minds to exaggerate idiosyncrasies may have received from the dominant authority a more or less wholesome check. But the opposite tendency—to shrink from pursuing arguments to their logical conclusions or suggestions to new conceptions—is generally only too strong in human nature, and needs to be corrected by some mental stimulus rather than to be crushed by a leaden weight. Certainly there is scope in society and in the Church for both mystics and dogmatists, if these terms be taken to indicate those who find their religion within or outside themselves respectively, though the two spheres can never be sharply divided. It may be thought that the sacramental view of life is more favourable to personal piety than that of sacramental observance as a definite obligation. Certainly to some persons the choice seems to be between mysticism and secularism pure and simple. But there are still some who believe in God as the disposer rather than the life of all things, and those who cling to the latter conception may allow that the former is after all a step on the ladder of truth. There may be as genuine faith and love in the simple minds that acknowledge the power and goodness of "One above us" as in those who feel that "In Him we live and move and have our being."

Sacrament to the non-mystic is a divinely given pledge which the recipient is bound, both by gratitude and from a regard to his own security, to maintain intact and to hold in due honour. To the mystic it is a means of realizing the great Reality, so as to conform himself to a divine ideal. As we shall see, these differences are quite apart from any distinction into Catholic and Protestant, more fundamental even than that between Christian and non-Christian. Both views may lead to aberrations, of very different kinds.

The chief aberration of mysticism is what the writer of the *Theologica Germanica* calls the False Light: the casting away of laws and ordinances too soon. It leads to fluidity in thought and to moral weakness. Periodical self-searching in preparation for Communion, frequent reminders of Christian obligations and sources of strength, are quite consistent with the sacramental view of life, though not necessarily presupposed by it. The contrary aberration is only too evident in the degradation, by systematic construction, of all religious observance into mechanical performance of outward acts. It is seen both among the illiterate and untaught, to whom the unexplained or fancifully explained ritual becomes superstitious, unemotional, and non-moral; and also more dangerously, as more beyond reach of correction—where ceremonial is kept up without regard to religious significance, whether from motives of national policy

or from condescension to popular prejudice. Those who believe, on historical evidence, in possible revivals, not only of religious life in individuals and societies, but in the symbolism to which that life is attached, must always regret the waste involved in rejection either of doctrine or of ritual that may one day be capable of reinterpretation in a higher sense, and so strengthen the appeal to religious feeling. But here again human beings fall mainly into two divisions: those who would say, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" and those whose cry would always be, "Ah yet, consider it again."

It is to the authoritative aspect of sacrament that the idea of *validity* applies; that of *efficacy* belongs rather to the subjective or mystic. Validity resides in accordance with legal obligations. A valid sacrament is one that "counts." As has already been pointed out, validity has been extended to sacramental acts in which some of the conditions have not been fulfilled: as is the case of ordination by a heretic bishop or marriage by a simoniacal priest. But these cases are exceptional, and are themselves within the competency of recognized authority. Efficacy is something quite different, and admits—as validity does not—of degrees. If baptism—in an adult—really amounts for him to a new departure in life, along a better way; if marriage implies real obligations contracted and perpetual union promised between man and wife; if reception of the Eucharist carries

with it a realization of communion with God—then those sacraments are efficacious, in that they really bring about or help to cause that for which they stand. This kind of efficacy is sometimes taken as the mark of sacrament as distinguished from symbolism : it really does act as what both Catholics and Protestants would call " means of grace."

But the question may arise : Are not all " means of grace " of sacramental efficacy ? Is it possible to limit the number of sacraments in any way, since we cannot deny that such things as the sight of a beautiful sunset, the grasp of a friend's hand, the story of some heroic deed, may give us a lift-up from things temporal to things eternal, or in a sense bring things eternal into our temporal life ? Again, why is not prayer regarded as sacramental, nor study of the highest things, nor other recognized " acts of piety " ? Perhaps the answer to this question is partly that in some of his religious acts man is still anthropomorphic, and seems to himself to stand in a relation to God similar to that which he occupies towards his fellow-men. To those who are imbued with ideas akin to those of the mystic philosophers prayer is distinctly sacramental. To the man in the street it is a simple process of asking a powerful Person to do something on one's behalf and to express at the same time (it may be quite sincerely) gratitude for favours already received. Similarly the outward signs of beauty and goodness which come to us in the sights and

sounds of Nature and the actions of excellent people or kind friends do not *seem* to common sense to have anything mysterious about them. It is only those who have thought for themselves or who have been led into the paths of great thinkers that realize the interpenetration of divine and human forces working for good in the individual and in the community to which he belongs. It is quite possible that a glib acquiescence in the statement that "all life is sacramental" might encourage such a process of secularization as to leave no scope for the recognition of spiritual values. If this be the case, sacraments as institutions need to be still maintained, even by those who constantly profess and enjoy the sacramental view of life.

CHAPTER VII

SACRAMENTS AND THE REFORMATION

Few facts impress the reader more as to the hold which sacramental theory and observance have on the mind of man than the persistence with which they survived, though with modifications in form, the religious upheavals of the sixteenth century. And few more melancholy instances of the failure of distinguished theologians to grasp or even to condone one another's differences are found in ecclesiastical history than the separation of Luther and Zwingli at Marburg in 1529.

It does not lie within our present scope to trace the various developments of the sacraments during the Reformation period. All that will be attempted here is to show how the views of Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin represented distinct standpoints, and also were in accordance with the character and the experience of each of the three reformers taken severally, in relation to the resulting differences in their work and their posthumous influence.

Luther's education had been scholastic. For some years he had lectured on Aristotle at Wittenburg. He cannot be said to have derived all that a more sympathetic study might have given him of the principles of his author—in fact, both Zwingli and Calvin show much more piety than he towards the ancient philosophers—but he had imbibed some principles of Mediæval Aristotelianism which he felt bound to maintain in the controversies of his day. At the same time Luther had begun his conflict in opposition to a moral evil, and here he resembled Zwingli, though the evils first encountered by each one respectively were very different. But Luther is differentiated from the other two reformers by the permanent results on his life of the intense religious sufferings and doubts which marked the earlier part of his monastic career. Furthermore—and this is important for our present purpose—his mind had early become saturated with the doctrine of the *Theologica Germanica*, which embodies in a simplified, popular, and generally scriptural form, the sacramental view of life handed down from the Early Mediæval mystics to Tauler and the *Freunde Gottes* of the fourteenth century. Zwingli, on the other hand, is a humanist, a patriot, and a man of action. His manful efforts against the enlistment of Swiss soldiers in Papal and French service in Italy, apart from their positive and direct results, tended to open his eyes and those of his partisans to the iniquities of the whole system under

which he lived. An unprejudiced student, he early discerned the differences between the doctrine and church principles of his time and those of the New Testament, and even of the Early Fathers. It would scarcely be correct to say that he represents the democratic, Luther the aristocratic, element in society and the Church. But certainly, while Luther, in Professor Pollard's words,[1] "saved the Reformation by cutting it adrift from the failing cause of the peasants and tying it to the chariot wheels of the triumphant Princes," Zwingli tried at least to effect some concessions and compromises when the peasants rose at Zurich. The war in which he met his end was being waged in the cause of the Reformation, though certainly not that of religious liberty, to which none of the leaders had yet attained. Zwingli is, as we shall see, hardly to be blamed if Luther and his adherents did not support his cause at the critical moment.

Calvin, in contrast to both the others, was a Frenchman, a lawyer, a scholar, and a thinker of great logical precision. If his uncompromising attitude on some fundamental religious doctrines may have alienated from his views the more optimistic theologians of the present day, even a slight acquaintance with his writings reveals remarkable clearness of mind and power of thinking out great problems quietly and thoroughly. This does not imply that he had more

[1] *Cam. Modern History*, ii, p. 194.

studious leisure than the other two reformers we are considering, since Calvin was called to arrange and guide the life of a great city. But no amount of practical work could spoil his character and career as a thinker.

As the subject of sacraments is complicated with that of artistic adjuncts to ritual, it may be interesting to observe that all three reformers were intensely fond of music, and, as far as generally appears, indifferent to the other arts. As a result, the debt of the world to Luther's share in the elaboration of the German Chorale is undoubtedly great. Calvin made a selection of sacred songs, and possibly the beautiful Huguenot melodies we enjoy at the present day may have become popularized under his influence. Zwingli, on the other hand, broke up the organ at Zurich and conducted non-musical services. Possibly he felt—as the others did not—a fear lest the ornamental element in religion should encroach on the real.

The first great movement towards the Reformation —if we start from the nailing of Luther's ninety-five theses to the door of the Castle Church at Wittenburg —may fairly be regarded as an attack on an abuse of one of the Seven Sacraments—that of Penance—which the reformers subsequently absorbed in one of the other six, or else omitted altogether. It is hardly necessary to say that the actions and utterances of Tetzel, who seems to have been a catspaw in the

hands of interested magnates,[1] were even more opposed to Church doctrine as authoritatively declared than was Luther's own subsequent development of the subject. The sale of indulgences was not the sale of permission to sin, nor even the purchase of pardon, on behalf of living or dead, for sins actually committed, but partial lightening of ecclesiastically imposed penance, supposed to follow on confession and contrition. The public were accustomed to such commutation in the secular sphere, and to transfer the idea to that of the Church seemed not unnatural. In some degree common sense might seem to be on the side of the indulgences, at least in special cases. Thus it might appear more reasonable that a sinner or criminal should pay a sum of money towards the building of a magnificent church or even a useful bridge than that he should undergo equal privations or sacrifice in a weakening fast or useless self-macerations. But this, of course, is a remark from the purely secular standpoint. And it seems to go behind the idea of sacrament altogether. Indeed, according to the older view, and that authorized by Thomas Aquinas, indulgences belong to the judicial, not the sacramental, side of religious discipline, and so have nothing to do with order. But the close connection of priestly absolution with relief from ecclesiastical penalty naturally prevented the general acceptance

[1] On this subject see the complete and learned investigation of H. C. Lea, *Auricular Confession and Indulgences*, iii.

and popular apprehension of the difference. Similarly the distinction between *pœna* and *culpa* (the actual punishment and the guilt that deserved it), impressed at first on every well-instructed Catholic, was too subtle for the man in the street.

Even during the lifetime of Aquinas a theory was developed which could hardly be considered compatible with the merely judicial and disciplinary character of indulgences. This theory, worked out by the Franciscan Alexander Hales, and more completely by the Dominican Albertus Magnus (d. 1280), was that of the "Treasure." The idea of all the virtues and merits belonging to Christ and all saints as forming a common fund of righteousness belonging to all who in faith and devotion accepted their share in it, might be—if wisely interpreted—a source of comfort and inspiration, forming one aspect of the "communion of saints." But reduced to the low level of profit and loss it became an excuse for lax living on the part of the generality and for greedy acquisitions on that of authority, especially of the Pope, who was supposed to hold the keys. As has been already suggested, religious principles and discipline lose their whole character directly mathematical methods are brought in to elucidate and enforce them. The *amount* of contrition necessary in the penitent before he should be absolved was perhaps an impossible problem in all circumstances. The bringing in of purgatorial considerations, with one's duty to the

departed, rendered the complication worse still. This was, of course, an element in other fields than that of indulgences, especially in masses for souls and perpetual chantreys. There were a good many devout persons, before or during the Reformation, who had no scruple against praying for the departed, but who objected to the custom of paying other people to keep up perpetual prayer and sacrifice on their behalf. It was not only a spirit of innovation that called for a serious reconsideration of the whole question as to Papal power and penitential discipline in relation to the sins of the living and the dead. Luther's questions were probably, for the most part, drawn up in good faith, with the hope, not of turning the world upside down, but of securing a rational academic discussion, with a subsequent authoritative decision on the points involved.

Yet there was necessarily more of a defiant than of an academic spirit in the "sledge-hammer" theses, as they have since been called.[1] Luther had evidently been roused to white heat by the extravagant—even blasphemous—assertions of some indulgence vendors; and having been of late greatly agitated and finally settled in mind as to the whole question of human sin and divine remission, he felt impelled to direct all the forces of his impetuous nature against intoler-

[1] They are given in Buchheim and Wace, translation of Luther's *Primary Works*, p. 414 *seq.* All the more important of them are in J. H. Robinson's *Readings in European History*, p. 58 *seq.*

able abuses in the Church. The setting forth of his principles in the theses is not methodical, but it certainly is not revolutionary. He begins by declaring that Christ's injunction "Repent ye" (*agite pœnitentiam*) refers to perpetual, not sacramental penance,[1] but that the inward penitence outwardly produces certain mortifications of the flesh—"Every true Christian, whether living or dead, has a share in all the benefits of Christ and of the Church given him by God, even without letters of pardon (37). The remission, however, imparted by the Pope is by no means to be despised, since it is, as I have said, a declaration of divine remission" (38). "The true Treasure of the Church is the Holy Gospel of the glory and grace of God" (72). "The Treasures of indulgences are nets, wherewith they now fish for the riches of men" (66).

Whether, if Leo X had had enough imagination to comprehend Luther's idea and purpose, and whether, if the proceedings taken with regard to him had been conceived at once in a more statesmanlike and more churchmanlike spirit, the whole course of ecclesiastical history might have been maintained in continuity and peace, it is impossible to determine. Certainly as things were, circumstances favoured a very rapid growth and consolidation in Luther's opinions and those of his followers. In a few years he had entirely

[1] Luther might have discovered that the equivalent Greek word *μετανοία* had undergone a similar degradation.

rejected Papal authority, accepted the Bible as the one test of truth, and become convinced that the "Gospel," and especially the doctrine of Justification by Faith, were inimical to the sacramental system as established in the Roman Catholic Church. Here we have to do with his new view of the sacraments.

Within one year (1520) Luther published three remarkable works: on *Christian Liberty*, the *Address to the German Nobility*, and the *Babylonish Captivity of the Church*. In 1529 he published his Larger Catechism. Even in the earlier of these documents he shows his breach with the sacramental system of Rome taken as a whole. Yet there is an element of conservatism evident all through. As we shall see, he retained the Eucharist with less dissension from Rome than we find in any other Reformers; likewise infant baptism. Marriage he did not regard as sacramental, but he abhorred divorce, to which he even preferred bigamy, "though whether it be lawful or not," he said, "I dare not define." Penance goes, but he thinks that Christians ought to confess their sins one to another. He rejects Extreme Unction, yet considers "there is no doubt at all that if even at the present day such prayer were made over the sick [as St. James supposes], that is, by grave and holy elders and with full faith, as many as we would might be healed." [1] He does not acknowledge Confirmation as a sacrament, but insists not only on the

[1] *Bab. Capt.*, tr., p. 405.

religious instruction of children, but on the need of leading them to the Eucharist. We should say to them, he says:[1] "Whoever does not seek or desire the Sacrament, or demand it at least once or four times a year, it is to be feared that he despises the Sacrament, and is no Christian, just as he is no Christian who does not believe in or listen to the Gospel." Finally, while rejecting any Sacrament of Orders, he held strongly to the maintenance of legitimate authority. Every Christian man is a priest (*not* every Christian woman), yet for discharging educational and even ceremonial functions, we need adequately trained persons. Thus Luther is zealous in urging university reform. "Nothing," he writes, "can be more devilishly mischievous than an unreformed university."

I have already suggested that Luther's exceedingly reverent feeling for the Eucharist was partly determined by his relation to the Mystics of some generations preceding his own. Among these we are to place Dionysius the Areopagite, over whose *Hierarchies* he is able to make merry—though he recognized with satisfaction that Dionysius, in his *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, has nothing to say about the supremacy of the Pope of Rome, and that he does not make up the number of the sacraments to seven. But the *Theologia Germanica*,[2] of which Luther issued

[1] Preface to *Shorter Catechism*.

[2] It should be unnecessary to call the attention of the English reader to Miss Winkworth's translation.

an edition *before* the publication of the theses, had early imbued him with a sacramentalism of the purest mystic type. There is in this book not very much mention of the several sacraments. To the writer the one reality is the Perfect, and when it comes, that which is in part is to be done away. But man, while in the world, needs types and symbols to enable him to enter into the life of the Perfect. The passage in which the Eucharist is referred to runs thus:[1] "When we speak of obedience, of the new man, of the True Light, the True Love, or the Life of Christ, it is all the same thing, and where one of these is there are they all, and where one is wanting there is none of them, for they are all one in truth and substance. And whatever may bring about that new birth which maketh alive in Christ, to that let us cleave with all our might, and to nought else; and let us forswear and flee all that may hinder it. And he who hath received this life in the Holy Sacrament hath verily and indeed received Christ, and the more of that life he hath received the more he hath received of Christ, and the less the less of Christ."

It may seem a far cry from this language of devout and mystical though eminently clear and practical religion to the dogmatic insistence on the words "This *is* my Body" as a statement beyond any moral or spiritual interpretation. Luther, as is well known, chalked the words "*Dies ist mein Leib*" on the

[1] Chapter xlv, Miss Winkworth's translation.

table of the hall in Marburg where the famous colloquy was held which ought to have bound Luther and Zwingli together. Zwingli accepted the words in a figurative sense, to be carefully fenced round against Luther. The result was thus described by Luther afterwards: "We took back nothing. . . . They professed with many words that they wished to agree with us so far as to say that the body of Christ is truly present in the Supper but spiritually, with the sole view that we deign to call them brethren and so feign harmony. Then Zwingli begged with tears in his eyes before the Landgrave [Philip of Hesse] and all of them, saying: 'There are no people on earth with whom I would rather be in harmony than with the Wittenburgers.' They strove with the utmost eagerness and vigour to seem in harmony with us, and could never endure the expression I used: 'You have a different spirit from ours.' They burst into flame every time they heard it."[1] The breach was effected. Zwingli soon after rode off to his death on the battlefield of Cappell.

Luther's attitude in the whole controversy may be explained by the co-existence of two often conflicting forces: his scholasticism—we might here say his pseudo-logical training—and his reverence for the teaching of the *Theologia Germanica*. It was pointed out to him (as it might have been by any modern)

[1] Luther to Jacobus of Bremen, *apud* Jackson, *Life of Zwingli*, p. 317.

that the ambiguous word in his final sentence was *is*. He did not suppose that the word was more than a copula—absent most probably from the first words of institution—and he was asked to interpret *is* as equivalent to *signifies*. Reference was made to Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dream: "The seven oxen *are* seven years." But Luther was dissatisfied, since Pharaoh's dream oxen were not solid animals and could not be so easily transformed into a figure of speech. It seems strange that none of his readings in Greek philosophy, with his own personal heart-searchings, should have brought him to apprehend the infinite complexity of the idea of Being. But he had, apparently, reached his own conception of that idea by the mystic way of the *Theologia Germanica*, of which he had said "that next to the Bible and St. Augustine, no book hath ever come into my hands from which I have learnt, or would wish to learn, more of what God, and Christ, and man, and all things are." One is led to suppose that he, like other theologians who are at once conservative and progressive by temperament, feared lest reinterpretation or verbal analysis of the words "This is my Body" might whittle away their sense altogether. He felt for the many, to whom the doctrine of the Real Presence was the most potent fact in their spiritual life. Christ or the Christlife was not just to be believed in or thought about, but—in a way which must needs remain mysterious—absorbed into

the very soul. He dreaded the magic and superstition associated with the Mass as popularly received far less than he feared any possible weakening of the human desire to become a "partaker in the Divine Nature."

The passage in Luther's works in which he expounds his sacramental doctrine most clearly is the relevant part of his Greater Catechism. "What," he asks, "is the Sacrament of the Altar? It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in and under the bread and wine through Christ's word, appointed for us Christians to eat and to drink. And as we said in speaking of Baptism that it is not mere water, so we say again here that the Sacrament is bread and wine, but not mere bread and wine such as is ordinarily placed before us at meals, but bread and wine comprehended in God's Word and bound up in it. . . ." *Accedat verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum.* This saying of St. Augustine is so precise and well expressed that he has scarcely "said anything better. . . ." He goes on to speak of the new life imparted to the faithful partaker, with the same meaning as that of the author of the *Theologia Germanica.* Luther, as might be expected, is not nearly so indignant with the elaboration of Transubstantiation as with the withdrawal of the Cup from the laity. This latter question, however, was not finally settled between Rome and reformers till much later—not entirely even by the Council of Trent.

Was the sacramental idea of Zwingli as meagre and unsatisfying to the human spirit as Luther and Melanchthon hold? If we read of the first Zwinglian Communion Service held instead of Mass in the Great Church of Zurich, we may be tempted to think so (April 13, 1525):[1] "A table with a clean linen cloth was set between the choir and the nave in the Great Minster. Upon it were the bread upon wooden platters and the wine in wooden beakers. The men and the women in the congregation were upon opposite sides of the middle aisle. Zwingli preached a sermon and offered prayer. The deacon read Paul's account of the institution of the Sacrament in 1 Cor. xi, 20 *seq.* Then Zwingli and his assistants and the congregation performed a liturgy, entirely without musical accompaniment in singing, but translated into the Swiss dialect from the Latin Mass service, with the introduction of appropriate Scripture, and the entire elimination of the transubstantiation teaching. The elements were passed by the deacons through the congregation. This Eucharistic service was repeated upon two following days." We are told that this proceeding caused some pain at first, but that the Zurichers generally accepted the changes. What exactly they implied to the religious consciousness of the people it is, of course, difficult to conjecture. What the Sacrament meant to Zwingli himself is explained in a letter he sent, after the

[1] See Jackson's *Life of Zwingli*, p. 229.

failure of the colloquy of Marburg, to the Emperor at the Diet of Augsburg.[1]

"I believe that in the holy Eucharist . . . the supper of thanksgiving, the true body of Christ is present by the contemplation of faith; *i.e.* that they who thank the Lord for the kindness conferred on us in His Son acknowledge that He assumed true flesh, in it truly suffered, truly washed away our sins in His own blood; and thus everything done by Christ becomes present to them by the contemplation of faith. But that the body of Christ in essence and really—*i.e.* the natural body itself—is either present in the Supper or masticated with our mouth or teeth . . . we not only deny, but firmly maintain to be an error opposed to God's Word." One would naturally ask, how far or in what sense does this "contemplation by faith" fall short of actual participation? Were both theologians led away by a forced application of physiological phraseology to spiritual experience? It is difficult to say. Zwingli was acquainted with the *Theologia Germanica*—though, strange to say, he seems to take Luther's edition as a product of Luther himself—but its language does not seem to have appealed to his consciousness as forcibly as it did to Luther's. The curious argument which follows—as to the impossible ubiquity of Christ's body—which even Calvin felt bound to develop in his controversy—only illustrates the slow pace at

[1] Appendix to Jackson's *Life of Zwingli*, p. 470.

which the Copernican doctrine was undermining the "three-story view" of the universe. Certainly, however, obstinate adhesion to a dogmatic assertion without possibility of compromise was not less marked in Zwingli than in Luther; since the former refused to accept (in November 1530) Butzen's Declaration published at a Diet of evangelical cities at Basel: "We confess that the Body of Christ is present in the Sacred Supper not as body nor in the nature of body, but sacramentally to the mind that is upright, pure, and reverent toward God." It seems hard to distinguish this statement from Zwingli's own, but the very likeness between the forms professed by bitterly dissentient champions may serve as an object lesson to those who would build up a union of churches or of parties on a basis of carefully chosen words.

When we come to Calvin's exposition of the sacraments (especially in his great work on *Christian Origins*) we find ourselves in a still controversial yet a less heated and a quieter atmosphere. Calvin was a man of broad culture—classical and theological—and of essentially logical mind. He could appreciate the mystic conception of sacramental participation in the Divine Nature without pressing to an illegitimate length such phraseology as is only applicable to material conditions and phenomena. As already said, he felt bound to dilate on what seems to us the irrelevant fact that a body could not conceivably exist in Heaven and at the same time in many places

on earth. But he is successful in steering between Scylla and Charybdis when he shows that participation in the sacred elements does *not* mean *either* a corporeal assimilation of miraculously changed food *or* simply belief in Christ as donor of that food.[1] "It behoves us to guard against two errors: that on the one hand we may not, by undervaluing the signs, disjoin them from the mysteries with which they are connected; nor on the other, by extolling them beyond all measure obscure the glory of the mysteries themselves. That Christ is the bread of life, by which the faithful are nourished to eternal salvation, there is no man, not entirely destitute of religion, who hesitates to acknowledge; but all are not equally agreed respecting the manner of partaking of Him. For there are some who define, in a word, that to eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood, is no other than to believe in Christ Himself. But I conceive that in that remarkable discourse in which Christ recommends us to feed upon His body, He intended to teach us something more striking and sublime: namely, that we are quickened by a real participation of Him (which He designates by the terms of *eating* and *drinking*) that no person might suppose the life which we receive from Him to consist in simple knowledge. For as it is not *seeing* but *eating* bread that administers nourishment to the body, so it is necessary for the soul to have a true and complete participation of Christ,

[1] *Christian Institutes*, English translation, vol. ii, pp. 467–8.

that by His power it may be quickened to spiritual life. At the same time we confess that there is no other eating than by faith, as it is impossible to imagine any other; but the difference between me and the persons I am opposing is this: they consider eating to be the very same as believing; I say that in believing we eat the flesh of Christ, because He is actually made ours by faith, and that this eating is the fruit and effect of faith; or, to express it more plainly, they consider the eating to be faith itself, but I apprehend it to be rather a consequence of faith. . . . We embrace Christ by faith, not as appearing at a distance, but as uniting Himself with us, to become our head and to make us His members."

To appreciate the full meaning of this passage the reader should continue the argument of Calvin, especially where he connects it with the power of the Holy Spirit. It will, however, be clear from the words cited that Calvin found a way of retaining Luther's mystic view of the Sacrament without any materialistic consequences.

In reading the various expositions of the subject as made by those who set forth their own views in the most forcible words at their disposal, we are inclined to think that the lack of harmony was chiefly due to a superfluous disparagement of the expressions used by opponents. That Zwingli really undervalued the ordinance is hardly compatible—in a soldier like himself—with his conception of the Sacrament as a

military oath. Even the phrase, a *mere* memorial —if he would have accepted it—seems to ignore the dignity and power of memory which chiefly raises man above the brute creation. *Merely* to *signify*, not to *be*, is not a lucid expression to any who have wrestled with the conception of Being in any manifestation. Again, to distinguish the indwelling power and life of Christ from the action of His Spirit may seem but a theological subtlety. All acknowledged themselves to be in presence of a mystery. And none of them would have had the effrontery to suppose that his explanations had removed the mysterious element from the field.

The Eucharist in the region of Sacrament corresponds to two great Doctrines : that of the Atonement and that of the Incarnation. To different churches and to different individuals one or the other has at times predominated. Each of these doctrines embraces a wide sphere of human experience and speculation, both enveloped in mystery. Sometimes a sacrament seems to express better than exact words the experience and the thoughts of those who have felt the power of the mystery. But both words and ceremonies need occasionally the control of the reasonable authority of experts rather than officials in order to prevent thought from degenerating into vapid dreaming and action into mechanical processes or fruitless operations.

It may seem strange that the three reformers we have been considering did not come to such wide

differences on Baptism as on the Eucharist. The rejection of Pædo-baptism might have seemed more consistent with some theories as to predestination and election. But Anabaptism or Katabaptism had early become associated with revolutionary movements in Church and State. All the three were decidedly family men, with a tender heart towards children, and all seem to have clung to the promises made to the seed of Christian parents. They all seem to expect that naturally, as young people come to adult life, they will, if they have been adequately taught, desire to become communicants in the church of their fathers. It would appear that the children of the earliest reformers were saved by some amiable inconsistency inherent in most religious teachers from the misery felt by many young people of English or Scotch Puritan stock, who were taught to regard themselves as outsiders from the Church and its comforts and hopes until they had undergone some process of conversion.

It has been noticed that the Sacrament of Penance was not retained as such, though it forms a third sacrament in the English Ten Articles of 1536. Calvin would link it (though not as a sacrament) with baptism, by making the impulse towards repentance and amendment to consist chiefly in a *remembrance*—almost a mental repetition—of baptism.

A strict line has generally been supposed to be drawn in all churches between sacraments and non-

sacramental ceremonies, but the distinction can hardly be made on quite logical principles. The Anglican distinction, based on supposed institution by Christ, is historically defective, as it would exclude baptism and include the foot-washing on Maundy Thursday. To those, however, who hold that the real use of any particular sacrament lies in its assertion of the sacramental view of life, the question is not only unimportant but unmeaning; or rather, any distinction made must be of degree and not of kind. The clumsy use of sacramental tests seems further removed from this view than any other which can be maintained. Yet even it was a witness to the persistence of the sacramental idea, and paradoxical as it may seem, the objections raised to all sacraments were not without a sacramental flavour. Their developments will concern us in our next two chapters.

CHAPTER VIII

SACRAMENT IN RELATION TO POLITICS AND MORALS

To those who regard the sacraments chiefly in relation to the individual in his most private feelings and experiences, any intervention of political motives in the regulation of sacramental custom might seem incongruous, almost profane. Yet, as we saw at the outset, the institutional side of religion can hardly be separated entirely from institutions in general, and in a sense all sacraments come under that head. Morality and sacramental observance are not always closely associated, yet the sacraments—at least those of the higher religions—must indeed have lost their vital force if they have become out of touch with the principles of conduct.

One feature common to political and to sacramental regulation is that they have mainly to do with men and women in groups. Sacramental sanction may immensely increase the tenacity with which the group holds together. I have already said that the coronation of a king is essentially sacramental in character.

At the same time a sacramental group unconnected with the larger political one may be a source of disunion. The Romans believed this, and therefore prohibited (except where unlikely to be dangerous) all secret societies, especially such as practised a foreign ritual. And we can hardly doubt that some feeling of the kind has been at the back of many instances of religious intolerance. Is there real scope for a system of solemn religious ritual and duty alongside yet independent of entire devotion to one's city or country? Then again, if sacramental obligations are attached to such as are political, the duty of the citizen is brought home with more force. I need hardly refer again to the original meaning of *sacramentum* as military oath. It is a clear advantage to the cause of law and order, as to any body desirous of establishing a system of any kind, to have some dread of the unseen, combined with habits of obedience and natural loyalty, implanted in those who might be tempted to resistance. Furthermore, as occurred in the great struggles between Papacy and Empire in the Middle Ages, the fear of a divided allegiance between two coincident and often opposed powers has led to conflicts, to compromises, and to many huge tomes of legal and philosophic lore, which—if they have not resulted in the establishment of any clear principle of demarcation and coincidence of authority—have at least helped to sharpen the human intellect and to reveal some permanent distinctions as to the

lower and the higher spheres of authority and obligation.

The subject of sacrament and politics is bound up, but not entirely commensurate, with the larger one of the historical and ideal relations of Church and State. The State has to intervene sometimes in questions as to religious propaganda and religious worship outside the sacramental sphere. But questions of sacrament come so near to the hearts of religious persons and also have been at times such a powerful weapon in the hands of secular rulers that they seem to take precedence over the disputed claims of spiritual and political lordship.

Compulsory sacramental accession to the religion of a conqueror, however repulsive to modern ideas of religious liberty, does not seem as a rule to have offended the mediæval mind. Nor was it always ineffectual. The heathen Saxons whom Charlemagne drove in gangs to be baptized in the Elbe seem to have become good Christians—or at least their descendants did. King Alfred, making peace with the Danes at Wedmore, became godfather to Guthrum, and the inhabitants of the Danelagh do not seem to have proved pagan recalcitrants. Though we find nobler and more reasonable accounts in the pages of Bede, of the conversion after due deliberation of Ethelred of Kent and Edwin of Northumberland, the change in religion seems rather to be that of communities than of individuals. From their day of baptism

kings and people seem to have adopted new principles, more or less reflected in laws and customs, which bound them to the rest of the Christian world. This is still more evidently the case with Clovis and his Franks. The sacramental organization they had joined was wider than any kingdom. An evil-living person—whatever his rank—or a heretic might be excluded from it by a voice from Rome. This power naturally restricts that of the sovereign. Thus we see that William the Conqueror, while drawing closer the relations of the English and the Roman Church, insists that none of his barons shall be excommunicated without his consent. With excommunication we come to what is essentially a department of the sacramental system and yet reaches far beyond it. And still more is this the case with Papal interdicts. Where the supreme spiritual authority prohibited sacramental rites, political authority could do nothing but protest and endeavour to obtain the removal of the incubus. To lay a people under an interdict as punishment for the sins of a ruler was an act that offended the conscience of many persons even when the interdict could not be resisted. The actual occurrence of such a decree as took place in England and in Germany marks the highest point of the sacerdotal authority, and was not permanently exercised. England was not laid under an interdict for the anti-Roman legislation of Henry VIII, possibly because it was only from the retention of something at least of sacramental

observance that any hope of return to the old order might be expected.

The co-existence of secular and ecclesiastical courts and the rivalry between them forms an important branch of mediæval history, but the ecclesiastical courts are concerned with many other than sacramental questions, though of course all that has to do with matrimony falls under that head. In England, by the Statute *de heretico comburendo* the punishment of those who denied church doctrine (especially sacramental) was carried out by the secular power after condemnation in an ecclesiastical court. There was no special inquisitorial power which might have limited that of the Crown. It is not always recognized that England burned heretics well on into the reign of James I. In the early years of that reign very heavy fines were imposed against parents who did not have their children baptized by Protestant clergymen.

In these cases the action of political authority may be said to have rested on two bases: the duty of Christian kings to see that the sacraments were duly administered and frequented in their dominions; and the danger of external intervention, with civil or foreign war, if the subjects did not, in their religious views and observances, keep within certain limits, and refrain from expressing sympathy with adherents of other churches or rival claimants to the crown beyond the sea. In Germany, after the devastating

War of the Reformation, the unsatisfactory solution of *cujus regio ejus religio* formed a temporary standing place, to be partly but not entirely superseded by the arrangements made after the Thirty Years War. In France, after equally disastrous wars, Henry of Navarre discovered that "*Paris vaut bien une messe,*" and found himself in a position to grant some measures of general, others of local toleration. But when the reaction came and the Edict of Nantes was revoked, liberty to differ in church principles and to serve the State at the same time was sacrificed to the principle of national unity. *One religion* seemed actually demanded by the fact of *one* nation, or of one intensely centralized government.

Louis XIV was not at that time in danger from foreign churches and pretenders. He was probably actuated by a sincere desire to save the souls of many by making sacramental confession and communion a universal rule. If it was objected that the *dragonnades*, so far as they sustained that aim, only made men hypocrites, the answer was ready: that the children at least would be brought up in the Catholic faith. To this there was no reply.

In other quarters, from very different reasons, a dread arose lest, by insisting on sacramental observance on the part of all members of councils or persons holding authority in the State, such persons should incur the guilt of sacrilege, and exercise a demoralizing influence on their neighbours. Granted that a Chris-

tian State should be governed by persons of Christian character and enjoying Christian privileges, who ought to have the power of determining that character and granting these privileges, the State or the Church? or ought, for this purpose, the Church and the State to count as one body? It would naturally seem that each organization ought to have at least the right to admit and exclude its own members. Yet if, in any State or lesser society, an excommunicated person was socially *tabu*, the power of exclusion might lead to the loss of useful servants of the sovereign and the community, or might give a determining bias in party conflicts. Thence arises the claim already mentioned of mediæval kings, that their nobles should not be excommunicated without royal consent. Nor was this difficulty confined to the Roman Church. In Geneva, when Calvin was organizing Church affairs, and the Council, desiring unity, would refuse to none the right to participate in the Lord's Supper, and would make frequent communion obligatory on all civic officers, Calvin insisted on moral and spiritual discipline.[1] "We do not think," he wrote, "that our duty is discharged when we have preached the Word. We must employ a greater degree of diligence in the case of those whose blood will be required at our hands. When we were full of anxiety in this respect, it tortured us as often as we had to celebrate the Supper, for all came to the

[1] Reyburn's *Life of Calvin*, p. 66.

Sacrament without distinction; although by so doing they exposed themselves to the wrath of God rather than became partakers of His sacrament of life. We had no peace therefore in our conscience till all who came to the Sacrament solemnly confessed the name of Jesus." This last clause would suggest that the question as to admittance or refusal depended more on orthodoxy than on morals, but the history of the conflict shows that the moral question was regarded as extremely important. The question of rival claims of civic councils and of pastors to settle the question of Church membership led to Calvin's first exile from Geneva.

The same kind of rivalry, on rather different grounds, led to a conflict which gave a much misused word to our language, that of *Erastianism*. This expression commonly stands, especially when used by controversialists unacquainted with history, for a system by which the civil authority prescribes and maintains the ecclesiastical order and in which the religious duties of the citizen are a corollary to his obligations to the State. But Erastus himself, a Swiss who had studied in Italy and then settled in the Palatinate, felt in conscience bound, when his master and patron changed the form of religion in Heidelberg from Swiss-Reformed to Lutheran, to throw up his functions in the University and retire to Basel (1529). But the occasion on which he earned his reputation as champion of the State against the Church—or rather the

ministers of the Church—was his opposition to an Englishman, Withers of Bury, who maintained before the University of Heidelberg the right of ministers and presbyters to excommunicate and to inflict lesser ecclesiastical penalties. Erastus maintained that in a Christian nation there could be but one coercive authority, that of the magistrate. Excommunication he would apparently intermit altogether, taking the desire to communicate as demonstrating a state of penitence. Moral discipline may be aided by the assistance of Church officers, but their function is to exhort, to teach, and to provide for divine worship, not in any way to coerce.

It has often been pointed out that the most palpable differences between the Calvinistic, with what we should to-day call the High Church view of discipline, and the Erastian, or Stuart High Church, would disappear in any scheme of broad toleration. If an excommunicated man might—should he wish it—communicate in another Church, and also be eligible for offices and privileges in the State, his excommunication would not be anything to complain of, either by himself or by the Government—unless, of course, he had incurred a disabling social stigma which, if undeserved, might possibly come within the bounds of libel. With us, as a rule, ecclesiastical censure may or may not do a person harm according to the attitude which the public takes up as to the value and significance of that censure. Perhaps a good many

people might think it desirable that *sins*, and not only *crimes*, should, if known and proved, form a hindrance to the popularity and influence of attractive but unwholesome characters. Yet to whom should we entrust the decision? Not, I think, to any Church consistory or to any authority that either public opinion or the verdict of educated society might appoint to the task.[1]

The only circumstances in which we, in England, see an occasional clashing between the "Erastian" and the stricter rule providing for admission to communion are those where the law has sanctioned practices that in the name of ancient usage are rejected as uncanonical by the clergy who should authorize the legal permission. Of course the most obvious cases of this difficulty are those in which scrupulously conscientious clergymen refuse to admit to communion those who have availed themselves of legal permission to marry a deceased wife's sister, and—far more important in view of future changes—married persons who have been divorced. Where marriage is itself reckoned as a sacrament, refusal to marry such persons constitutes a serious dissension as to the limits of authority in relation to sacramental practice. Small matters of ecclesiastical ritual come under the same head, but are far less important.

[1] There is a most learned and able article on Erastus in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, November 1900, by the late Dr. Figgis, but it does not convince me that exclusion from Communion ought not to be within the province of the Church.

The practical solution is, I think, to be found only in the establishment of more reasonable relations between Church and State. The decision in a particular case ought not to be left to the individual clergyman, nor should there be a too rigid rule to bind the Church. Whether or no the Council just now established by the Enabling Act will rise to the occasion still lies on the knees of the gods. Meantime, it would be bad both for religion and for morals if in these matters the Church took one line and the State another. Excommunication no longer involves civil disabilities, but it does, and it should, convey moral disapprobation. The parties in difficulty might be married in a non-conforming place of worship or might as a rule go through the civil form only. A good many English people would like to have the civil and religious ceremonial in marriage entirely separate, but this would probably take away the feeling of reality in plighting the troth in the presence of God, and any gain from the diminution of frivolity and extravagance in weddings would be outweighed by the loss of poetic and religious associations.

We have already noticed that a connection between supposed political interests and sacramental observances sometimes led, as in the Geneva of Calvin's time, to a sacramental test (other than an oath) for holders of office. This was of course a marked feature in England from Stuart times till the middle of the last century. Under the Tudors and the

Stuarts, opposition to the Church as by law established was taken—and thereby, perhaps, actually made a mark of disloyalty. But the principle was unsound because the Nonconforming Puritans, on whom the Corporation Act chiefly fell, were generally loyal to the Crown and Government. The Test Act was, of course, designed against another class of objectors—the Roman Catholics—on whom a suspicion of disaffection, later combined with attachment to exiled princes, naturally though not quite fairly, continued to rest. Nothing can show the callousness of the rank and file of English people in religious matters during the eighteenth century more strongly than the continued profanation of the most sacred ritual to a purely political significance. For the Roman Catholic it was superfluous, where the oath of abjuration was exacted; for Protestant Nonconformists ineffective; for the public generally demoralizing in a high degree. Long before, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the English Roman Catholics had petitioned Pius IV to let them off the obligation of avoiding occasional attendance in an English church.[1] There is no question, they say, of communion; and the Prayer Book, though defective, contains no impiety or false doctrine; moreover, the penalty for non-attendance is death (really it was a fine of a shilling). But the answer was a decided negative. Attendance at such

[1] See very interesting document in Maitland's *Elizabethan Gleanings*, Eng. Hist. Rev., 1900, p. 530 *seq.*

services was strictly prohibited by a generally conciliatory pope. Surely, while the Vatican thus stood its ground, attendance at an Anglican service might have seemed for the Protestant Nonconformists a sufficient and less objectionable test than that of the Sacrament.

But for the Puritans, as we have said, the test was ineffectual. A good many complied and became "occasional conformists." The Bill to abolish occasional conformity by disallowing the conformity of such as had relapsed into attendance at dissenting chapels was bandied about as a party measure, and then superseded by acts of indemnity for negligence in conformity, till these were rendered superfluous by the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1848. Meanwhile the Test was accepted by persons who made no pretence of giving it religious significance. Mr. Lecky, in his lucid treatment of the subject,[1] quotes Swift: "'I was early,'" Swift writes, "'with the Secretary (Bolingbroke), but he was gone to his devotions and to receive the Sacrament. Several rakes did the same. It was not for piety but employment, according to Act of Parliament.' It even became the general custom in the Church for the minister, before celebrating the Communion, to desire the legal communicants, if there were any, to separate and divide themselves from those who were come there purely for the sake of devotion." Truly

[1] *History of the Eighteenth Century*, Lecky, vol. i, p. 255 *seq.*

a *reductio ad absurdum*—or to something worse—of the sacramental test.

The upshot of our inquiry so far seems to be that, however great the binding force in a political community of sacramental usage, no attempt to maintain it, artificially and legally, by political authority, is likely to fulfil its object, while it is quite sure to stir dissension among those who feel most strongly on both sides, and can only lower both the Government and the religion of the people in general respect.

The only case in which a sacramental test has of late been advocated in England by persons of strong religious principles, has been that of membership in a Council of professed Churchmen for regulating Church business. In the lately passed Enabling Act the proposal to restrict such membership was rejected on the grounds that the English Church as by law established occupies a position of historical and practical influence which comes home to many who are hardly within its spiritual pale. The compromise by which membership is allowed to non-communicants, but office-holding is refused, does not seem very satisfactory. Still less is the curiously English inconsistency of a baptismal franchise, which does really impose a sacramental test, but throws back the responsibility—in more than ninety-nine cases out of a hundred—on the parents of the applicant for membership. Still, all who believe in our Church as national, or who desire that it may one day recover

the national position it once held, must be tolerant of many inconsistencies in order to secure a broad and strong basis. After all, there is not much fear lest persons radically unsympathetic with the character and objects of the Church should either exert themselves too vigorously in its affairs or should seek mundane advantages by insincere professions. The fact that so many *soi-disant* churchmen are non-communicants may be one calling for serious thought. But it would not be made less of a fact by being ignored in schemes of church reform.

We may now turn from the political to the more purely moral side of this subject, and inquire whether there is any uniform relation discernible between the morals of a people and its attachment to sacramental usage; also whether conspicuous eminence of religious character is or is not generally found to be connected with importance attached to sacraments. We shall, in general, confine ourselves to Christian character and sacrament.

There can be no doubt that sacrament was the chief element in the worship of the early Church, though much in the way of instruction and spontaneous manifestation of feeling seems to have accompanied it. In the classical passage of Pliny, already referred to, the tortured deaconesses are said to have declared that on receiving imperial prohibition the Christian community had ceased to come together a second time *after* their early morning meeting to

partake of a common meal ; but a good many commentators, who cannot imagine that under any prohibition the Eucharist would have been omitted, think that there was some " breaking of bread " early, and that the *agape*, which was not sacramental, was more easily let slip. The question is doubtful, but certainly evidence given under torture affords insufficient basis for conjecture.

We have already noticed more than once that the acceptance of a religion which necessitates something like periodical self-examination and self-criticism under guidance of experts must open up new possibilities of moral culture to any person or tribe. Of course the self-examination may originally be cursory and the discipline enforced somewhat mechanical and casual. Yet the fact that confessions must be made led to instruction being given on the seven deadly sins and the seven virtues, cardinal and Christian, which must have been highly stimulating to moral culture.

Again, in disturbed times and regions, where the blood feud still prevailed, the proclamation of a sacred season of peace and goodwill, during which to commit a violent deed would be to incur the guilt of sacrilege, must often have led to a delay of vengeance during which the malevolent feelings might pass away. Even now we hear how, in backward places, a priest who uses wisely and zealously his power over the souls of his parishioners may prevent a murderous

deed by refusing the Easter communion to a penitent until he abjures his dark intention.[1] In modern civilized society such control may be no longer needed, but we can hardly say that the modern Christian is above the need of spiritual direction. This subject has already been touched upon and will concern us again. All that we need say here is that any church which neglects to insist on the duty of something at least analogous to confession and contrition before the communicant can approach the altar has lost its power as a moral lever in society. It is an interesting question how far we may expect to find coincidence between genuine and lofty piety and frequency of sacramental observance. A good deal depends on the religious habits of any particular period, as well as on the temper and character of the individual. Some of the ancient anchorites who were regarded as paragons of religious fervour lived under conditions in which participation in the sacraments must needs be highly infrequent.

On the other hand, certain saints have felt a daily participation both a joy and a source of strength. This was the case as described by Baron F. von Hügel,[2] with St. Catherine of Genoa, though she was so indifferent to the sacrament of penance that she went

[1] See a remarkable case in Miss Durham's *Burden of the Balkans*, of an Albanian priest, who was able to check blood feuds by his power of excommunication.

[2] *The Mystical Element in Religion*, ii. 87, 7, and i. 117 *seq.*

for many years without any spiritual direction and apparently without confession. Regular and very frequent attendance at Mass with comparatively infrequent communion seems to have been the practice with devout persons during the Middle Ages. Lady Margaret Beaufort, according to Bishop Fisher's funeral sermon, was "'houshylde' nearly a dozen times a year," that is less than once a month, allowing for the great festivals. Periods of religious revival of various types have generally been marked by a tendency to frequent communion; but on the other hand, the more reverently that sacrament is regarded the greater the fear, with scrupulous consciences, lest it should be made common. The great Puritan-Catholic Antoine Arnaud wrote a long and learned treatise "de la fréquente communion" against those who would admit to communion without preliminary discipline. He held that it was quite a wholesome thing for a Christian to be sometimes kept for a time without a means of consolation which he might urgently desire. The Jesuits, he held, were far too slack in their demands on penitents, and the result was a lowering of the whole church standard. Geneva and Paris had suffered from different forms of the same disease: the growth of the Church in extent to the disparagement of its height.

It might easily be said that the moral effect of an annual communion taken seriously would be to let the partakers fall into evil ways in the hope of setting

matters straight before the next time of reckoning. On the other hand, daily, or for some persons weekly, communions may be inconsistent with any kind of discipline, imposed either by a priest or by the individual conscience. Liberty and diversity are absolutely essential in a broadly based Church or society.

The alternatives just mentioned may seem to many persons non-existent. To accept discipline at the direction of a priest is out of harmony with the modern mind, except in rare reactionary cases. Yet in these days, more than in most others, we seem to stand in need of some fixed principles by which the moral and spiritual capacities both of children and adults are developed and strengthened for effectual work. But the spiritual director is not merely the ordinary minister of religion, however conscientiously he may endeavour to perform those functions. On the other hand, "Spiritual Experts," such as have appeared from time to time, are not easily found and still less easily trained. Protestants have rejected—through experience of frequent abuse—one of the most potent means of checking bad tendencies and favouring moral growth. Yet in the case of friends belonging to the Roman Catholic Church I do not find that moral censorship has been sufficiently exercised so that a spiritual patient may apply a remedy before the case becomes desperate. If only a small fraction of the energy and intellect now being spent in the

improvement of social institutions, recreation, popular instruction, and amusement were directed to the most crying need of the age, life might become a better thing for the next generation.

CHAPTER IX

ANTI-SACRAMENTAL MOVEMENTS AND ARGUMENTS

We have suggested that sacraments—or something analogous to a sacramental system—are normally found in every religion which has exercised power over a large body of people. Objections to sacraments are more often objections to certain ritual and practices belonging to them on the institutional side than to sacramental observance in general. Yet there are many cases in which the feeling against sacraments is so strong as to resist them in their general influence and their very existence. And again, sacraments may fall into desuetude and contempt in such a way that without active propaganda against them a whole society may become anti-sacramental in tone, in the sense rather of non-observance than of hostility. In such conditions there may yet be what one might call survivals of sacrament in special importance attached to some particular habits of life and customary courtesies. But such are only to be regarded as of a sacramental kind where

they stand for beliefs or principles bound up with the life of the society in which they are practised.

Opposition to the religious forms imposed by any authority, civil or ecclesiastical, is likely to be early directed against sacramental observance. We have seen how, in the Reformation of the sixteenth century, though the first questions leading to the revolt touched the greater sacraments only indirectly, yet before long it was the sacramental rather than the doctrinal structure of the Roman Church that had to bear the full brunt of the attack. In earlier and partial revolutions the process was similar, though from the way in which the beliefs and practices of heretics have generally been handed down to us, it is not always easy to determine their character. Heresy, it has been said, is generally the result of individualism; yet there is often a strong racial element, with political sympathies and antipathies, added to the personal. Some attention has lately been given—and much more might be given—to the coincidence of religious with national or local elements in the ecclesiastical strife of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries. These do not, however, concern us much at present. It is plain than any heresiarch or recalcitrant group could, in taking up a line opposed to the dominant authority, follow in regard to the sacraments one of three courses: those already existing might be retained but modified; new ones might be introduced; or *all* sacraments might be discarded *en bloc*.

So far as dissent or heresy was on purely religious grounds, one of the main facts likely to determine the sacramental principles of the leader would be his view, and that of his followers, on the nature of matter, and the relation of the outward world of experience to the spiritual life of the believer. *If*, according to doctrine which had long prevailed in some Eastern regions and had been more or less rationalized by Greek thought, the theory were accepted that matter in itself was impure, and that all things participating in material existence were anti-spiritual, the Christian sacraments ought, consistently, to be repudiated, since they regard water, bread, and wine as typical of spiritual purification and sustenance. We cannot, however, expect perfect consistency in these conceptions and their ceremonial consequences, since dualistic systems differ much among themselves. The Marcionites (in the middle of the second century) had a curious practice of permitting the rite of baptism to be performed three times on the same person, thereby allowing for two lapses into sin, but making a third irremediable. In their exteme asceticism they abolished the use of wine in the Eucharist. This may seem consistent with their ordinary practices, and indeed it may appear strange that the total abstainers of later times, who deny not only the lawfulness of wine drinking but the physical refreshment derived from alcohol in moderation, should retain wine as the sacramental symbol of spiritual invigoration. It also

follows from the ascetic principles of all sects which disparage marital relations that they can never regard marriage as in any way sacramental.

The Albigensian and the Bogomilian heresies seem to have comprised a large number of ideas and practices varying from the Catholic type, and also differing very considerably in different regions and periods. Their adherents were generally unattached by race and traditions to the ruling peoples of the world, and probably the estrangement from Roman and Greek systems of large bodies of Slavs and Orientals—an estrangement greatly increased by diversity in sacramental ideas and ritual—proved of great effect. For it rendered almost impossible such a union of Christendom against Islam as might have solved the "Eastern Question" at its first suggestion.

It may here be suggested that Islam might seem an exception to the rule stated that influential religions always have some sacramental elements. The absence of symbolism from the Mohammedan system is, however, by no means complete, as we see in the importance attached to pilgrimages, the ritual of prayer, and the solemn obligatory fasts. True, Mohammed and his followers were like earlier heretics and church reformers in insisting on the spoken or written word above all sensible communications to or from the Divine. But the written word in some of its manifestations may become, among susceptible and non-intellectual persons, potent with a force disconnected

from its real significance. And again, Mohammed, though he counts as founder of a new religion, seemed to himself and his contemporaries in the light of a prophet who was to disperse superstitions by the light of truth. If the earlier prophets, such as Amos and Micah, had not only inveighed against the holy places and sacrifices, but effectually destroyed all respect for their sanctity, neither Judaism nor Christianity would, in all probability, have dealt so largely in symbol and sacrament as they actually did. This is, however, a doubtful question which might admit of serious controversy.

The great anti-sacramental movements of the sixteenth century resemble, in various ways, both the ancient heresies and the sects which have found a home in our religious societies of to-day. The Saxon, Swiss, Rhenish, and Dutch Anabaptists differed greatly in fortunes as in objects, yet there were radical resemblances. In almost all countries where their doctrines and influence spread, they appear primarily as in opposition to authority both in church and state, and this opposition is applied mainly in four directions: (1) Against the sacerdotal system of Rome; here, of course, the earliest preachers could appeal to the exhortations of Luther and Zwingli. (2) Against Catholic usage as opposed to the individual recognition of the "inner light"; here none of the reformers were prepared to go the whole length, though all had made utterances which might be used

on behalf of the cause. (3) Against the civil government, especially where the political system had crystallized into forms intensely oppressive to the peasant class; it was here that Luther's sledge-hammer fell hardest on those who had hoped most from his enunciation of Christian liberty. The demands drawn up by the insurrectionary peasants at Memmingen[1] in 1525, and those put forward in the Tyrol and elsewhere a few years later, aimed primarily at the abolition of villeinage with all that it involved, and came to be extended to schemes of democratic government both in ecclesiastical and civil affairs. The far wider schemes attempted by those who endeavoured to set up the Kingdom of God in Münster would have removed or transmuted all the foundations of civil society. Private property was to be not only theoretically condemned but practically abolished. Marriage, or at least regular monogamic union, was likewise eschewed. A more passive resistance had shown itself in other regions, where objections to war, oaths, and all social distinctions had come to hamper the action of Government officials.

(4) A fourth direction in which the anti-institutional zeal of the times was shown was against any custom or usage not directly founded on Scripture. It was on Scripture, of course, that the objections to oaths and to armaments were based. Naturally those who possessed the most entire confidence in the sufficiency

[1] *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. ii, p. 180.

of Scripture had little power of rational interpretation. But their imaginations were fired with glorious hopes for the future. Many of them were Chiliasts, and looked for a speedy advent of Christ and the establishment of a rule of righteousness. The story of their disappointment is a dark page in history. Many of those who looked for a better system and a rule of love and peace proved as destructive in their action and as inaccessible to feelings of compassion and forbearance as their worst enemies. Those who opposed them did not minimize their atrocities, and there was little care to inquire whether they might have had a just cause. Luther sanctioned the most sanguinary measures against them, and the Protestant princes helped to crush them hopelessly. In course of time orderly Anabaptist churches were founded in Holland, and thence the sect spread into England, though the differentiation between Baptists and other Nonconformists does not seem to have been complete before about 1620. The unfortunate association with memories of Münster placed the objectors to Pædobaptism in a less desirable position, for many years, than that held by Brownists or Presbyterians. This was, if inevitable, hardly just, since the English Baptists objected to infant baptism on the same ground which the other sects took in opposing the Government policy : the fact that in Scriptural records and directions we have no statements and injunctions on the subject. The Church consists of believers,

and believers enter by baptism: an infant cannot believe, therefore he has no claim to be admitted by baptism into the Church. The explanation of Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli as to the privileges of the children of believing Christians seemed to them irrelevant. Perhaps, on the whole, the opinions of English Baptists, and those who emigrated to America, differed from those of the Pædo-baptist dissenters only in being rather more consistent.

But with the earlier Anabaptists the case was different. Their objection to baptizing infants was not purely negative. They preserved more faithfully than the other sects the original idea of the sacrament of Baptism (whether or no they called it a sacrament) as the entrance into a new life. For them, as for the primitive Christians, baptism meant the entrance into a new society, with new standards and new hopes. The reign of Christ on earth was to begin with all speed, and to be heralded by the abolition of all injustice and oppression, even of the bases of civil life—such as private property, coercive government, and social distinctions, on which the old and effete structure had been built. The sacraments of the new order were not those of the old, nor of those who were aiming at what seemed an unsatisfactory compromise. If the Lord's Supper were no more than a fraternal meal, the fraternity was strong enough to give it the "mystery" significance of any ancient society. If part of the catholic meaning of

baptism was dropped, the rite of initiation (whether by immersion or sprinkling) stood for much, and might imply the duty of resistance unto death.

It may seem that the revolutionists against political and social institutions in the sixteenth century should not be reckoned as anti-sacramentalists, yet they stand out from the other sects of their time in their strong opposition to the sacramental systems of Catholics and Protestants alike. Much more definitely and clearly opposed, however, was, in England, the Society of Friends, as well as some similar communities on the Continent.

The doctrine and whole view of life held by the English Quakers has been made known to the world in that very remarkable work, the *Diary of George Fox*. Fox certainly lived consistently with his principles, whatever collisions they might cause with authority of any sort, whatever intense sufferings and disabilities they might involve. For a clear and reasoned exposition of Quaker principles, however, set forth in moderate terms with cogent reasoning and considerable learning, we turn to Robert Barclay's *Apology for the True Christian Divinity: being an Explanation and Vindication of the Principles and Doctrines of the People called Quakers*. This was printed, with an introduction addressed to Charles II (the author declined to call it a dedication) in 1675.

Though distinctly anti-sacramental in his whole attitude towards Christianity, Barclay stands for the

positive rather than the negative side of the question. He is naturally bitter against those who have persecuted the members of his sect for denying the sacraments, but he is not primarily an opponent of ecclesiastical authority of every kind. To him the sacraments and all other religious institutions are rather superfluous than mischievous, and their observance is due to ignorance and neglect of weightier matters rather than to serious error. He does not doubt that they were allowed in the Apostolic Church, for the sake of the weaker brethren. But the essential element in his theology and personal religion is the doctrine of the inner light, which renders not only Christian institutions, but even actual knowledge as to the life and work of Christ, non-essential to salvation. Thus, in the fifth and sixth propositions of his *Theses Theologicæ*, he writes : " God, out of His infinite love, who delighteth not in the death of a sinner, but that all shall live and be saved, hath so loved the world that He hath given His only Son a light, that whosoever believeth in Him should be saved ; who enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, and maketh manifest all things that are reproveable, and teacheth all temperance, righteousness, and godliness ; and this light enlighteneth the hearts of all in a day, in order to salvation, nor is it less universal than the seed of sin, being the purchase of His death who tasted death for every man ; for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. Accord-

ing to this principle all the objections against the universality of Christ's death are easily solved . . .; as some of the old philosophers might have been saved, so also may now some who by providence are cast into those remote parts of the world where the knowledge of the history is wanting be made partakers of the divine mystery, if they receive and resist not that grace. . . ." Again, under Proposition XI, he declares, respecting worship, that "we ought not to do it when and where we wish, but when and where we are moved thereunto by the secret inspirations of His Spirit in our hearts." *A fortiori* he would not allow any definite Ministry or Orders. The only baptism he recognizes is "a pure and spiritual thing, the baptism of the spirit and of fire, by which we are buried with Him, that being washed and purged from our sins, we may walk in newness of life, of which the baptism of John was a figure, which was commanded for a time, and not to continue for ever. As to the baptism of infants, it is a mere human tradition, for which neither precept nor practice is to be found in all the Scripture" (Proposition X). "The communion of the body and blood of Christ is inward and spiritual, which is the participation of His flesh and blood, by which the inward man is daily nourished in the hearts of those in whom Christ dwells" (Proposition XIII). In a later comment on this proposition, Barclay gives his interpretation: "what that body, what that flesh and blood is . . .

that heavenly seed, that divine, spiritual, celestial substance, of which we spake before." He goes on to comment on the Johannine doctrine of the "bread from heaven." Of this body of Christ the pre-Christian patriarchs partook, as St. Paul says in 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. "The supper of the Lord and the supping with the Lord, and partaking of His flesh and blood is nowise limited to the ceremony of breaking bread and drinking wine at particular times, but is truly and really enjoyed as often as the soul retires into the light of the Lord, and feels and partakes of that heavenly life, by which the inward man is nourished, which may be, and is, often witnessed by the faithful at all times, though more particularly when they are assembled together to wait upon the Lord."

There seemed to him to be two primary misconceptions at the root of the Roman and the current Protestant doctrine of the Lord's Supper: the first, that the Body of Christ by which believers are nourished had any but a figurative connection with the body that once walked the earth; and the second, that participation in the spiritual body was necessarily connected with the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Examining the records in the Gospels and in the Epistle to the Corinthians, he came to the conclusion that Christ never intended to found an institution such as the Eucharist. He accepted as authentic the words "Do this in remembrance of

Me," though he notices that they are only to be found in St. Luke and St. Paul, but, after referring to the Jewish Passover customs, he says that the expression "will amount to no more than this: that being the last time that Christ did eat with His disciples, He desired them that in their eating and drinking they might have regard to Him, and by the remembering of that opportunity be the more stirred up to follow Him through sufferings and death."

From Barclay's point of view all the controversies about the nature of the Eucharist—elements, consecration, reservation—seemed vapid and unmeaning. Naturally *Orders* have never been an institution in the Society of Friends, and penance has no place in their system. To discontinue fixed forms of prayer was in accordance with their entire belief in the dependence of all religious action and feeling on the direct action of the Spirit as it touched the individual soul. The primary religious act of any person is *attention* or *waiting*. It might seem that consistency would abolish social religion altogether. Yet we know that it has not been so. Perhaps it was simply a fact of experience that when gathered together, with the same aspirations and intentions, a devout congregation did actually feel working among them what they called the Divine Seed, or a kind of inspiration to utter somewhat either to God or to man which, in the receptive atmosphere of sympathetic hearers did

become the prayer and the instruction of a united assembly.

There is a good deal of logical coherence in Barclay's system, and great width of knowledge and of sympathetic fervour in his exposition. He quotes, for the essentially spiritual nature of all that belongs to true religion and good life, very many of the Church Fathers and some ancient philosophers, as, *e.g.*, Epictetus and Plotinus. He is strong in his denunciation of what he regards as fallacious reasoning and the degradation of spiritual ideas, yet he is quite ready to allow that in the experience of devout persons, religious observance has often been accompanied by reception of the divine "seed."

As is well known, most Friends have departed in many ways from the strict principles of their founders, and tolerated vocal prayer at fixed times, and the means by which other Christians try to reach after the "Light" or the "Seed"; also that they have something like a settled ministry. But the essentially spiritual character of all worship and the universality of divine illumination have always received their witness, to the great benefit of the Church and the world. A very fascinating book on the subject of *Quaker Strongholds* by Miss Caroline Stephen is well known. The writer, a highly-educated woman brought up in an Anglican-Evangelical though not illiberal atmosphere, explains how, when her mental needs and moral sympathies had become somewhat

alienated from the church of her fathers, she found all the scope that her emotional and intellectual nature required in the meetings and the general religious life of the Quakers. "It was in the quiet meetings," [1] she writes, "that I myself first learnt the full meanings of the words 'baptizing into the Name . . . and the communion of the body of Christ.' The outward observances by which these 'holy mysteries' are typified in the devotions of other bodies had been to me rather a hindrance than a help. I cannot help suspecting that they are so to many. For if not a help, they must be a hindrance."

It may naturally be said that anti-sacramentalism, whether of an aggressive or of an almost quietistic type, is likely always to be a refuge for individuals of strongly-marked and not very accommodating character, and for societies of a peculiar kind formed under stress and strain. There is a moral warmth, an intellectual liberty, and a spiritual elevation found in their best representatives which generally wins respect and often affection. Yet the critical mind may sometimes complain of an efflorescence of sentiment, with a tendency to ignore certain permanent qualities of human nature.

Looked at on the intellectual side, it may perhaps be said that the deepest-thinking Friends hardly go far enough. They reduce religious symbolism to a minimum. But may not that minimum be fixed too

[1] *Quaker Strongholds*, p. 95.

low? May not symbolic acts sometimes bring us nearer to the truth for which we are seeking than words which may be *supposed* to set forth plain truth to plain minds, but which are in origin and in the impression they convey only vague approximations, mainly of a symbolic kind? If we determined that at least the Divine Reality should be apprehended by us through its own self-imparting, without symbolic or other means, should we not, in eschewing such meaning, be rejecting opportunities of reaching the highest that is accessible to our present faculties?

Possibly others have been struck—as the present writer has been—by the similarity through diversity noticeable in the celebration of Mass before a congregation of devout persons (preferably peasants) and a Quakers' Meeting of the most favourable kind. In both there is a time of solemn waiting. Among the Catholics, words are spoken, but they are not the chief element, and are generally in a tongue which the people cannot understand. The waiting is in both cases the expectation or the desire for a manifest presence. In the church the bell sounds, the Presence is recognized. All kneel in silent adoration. In the Quakers' Meeting the Presence is likely to be felt by one person moved, as he or she believes, by a spiritual power. All rise to share in a common invocation or sit to receive a divinely given word of exhortation. The parallel may not be exact in

all particulars, but it is hardly fanciful to recognize in it a meeting of extremes.

Again, a study of the sacramental view of life followed by reflections on devout anti-sacramentalism leads to a conclusion that here again, though not on quite the same grounds, we have such a combination of what would seem heterogeneous elements. To the sacramental mystic the one reality is divine, and all things sensible or insensible are partakers in reality in proportion as they share in the Divine Nature. Their existence is sacramental if they exist at all. They are to the observer signs and symbols of One in whom they have their being. To the "Friend" anti-sacramentarian, special signs and symbols are useless cumber, since the power and goodness of the Divine Reality are to be discerned throughout creation by those to whom the light has been vouchsafed. The religion of the plain man consists in belief in an anthropomorphic Deity, to whom he addresses petitions and from whom, directly or indirectly, he receives his general orders, with hopes of reward if he obeys, threats of punishment if he is recalcitrant. The idea of One "in whom we live and move and have our being," to whom, if words are addressed, they are only of use in helping the worshipper to formulate his needs; whose commands are not orders issued from without but motions felt within; such an One is the God of the idealist, be he wise or ignorant, but not of the plain man to whom the present world

of matter seems supremely real. The sacramentarian holds that the Great Unknown may be dimly yet powerfully apprehended by signs and symbols. The anti-sacramentarians might also acknowledge this, though denying the value of any special sacraments. They would join hands in deprecating what is sometimes called " simple faith," or the dread of an arbitrary ruler tempered by hope in some possibility of cajoling him or in finding him not altogether unkind. Belief in Sacraments and belief in direct divine communications which render sacraments superfluous are nearer to each other than either is to the crude belief in an autocratic creator or a "great non-natural man."

CHAPTER X

SACRAMENT IN RELATION TO ART AND CULTURE

This subject is part of a much larger one, on which much thought and literary labour has been expended, the relation of art to religion in general—of the æsthetic to the devout temperament or character of the individual, and the resemblances and contrasts of nations that have excelled in artistic or religious capacities respectively. It has been argued by some that the two sets of qualities are naturally opposed; by others that each can be developed to perfection only by close co-operation with the other. Historians may point to instances (as during the Italian Renaissance) where art stood at a high level and the moral standard was low. On the other hand, it may be and has been plausibly argued that where religious and moral distinctions are confused, art loses not only touch with the ideal, but all the dignity and truthfulness that can keep it serious and permanent; similarly that where feeling for artistic beauty is discouraged, religion may be strong on the moral

side, but lacking in tenderness and humanity. One fact, however, is clear, that, given a certain æsthetic sensibility, in an individual or a society, the type of religious faith which comes to predominate has considerable influence on the development of that sensibility and the kind of artistic work which is likely to be produced. Here we have to consider the relation of the æsthetic to the religious elements in life and society in one particular aspect : the mutual influence of the sacramental observances of a person or a people and the general course of life. For this purpose we shall have to use the word *sacrament* in the more general sense, so as to include all symbol and ceremony of solemn import, not merely the rites to which special efficacy is attributed.

Some undisputed points have already come under our notice. The genesis of art among savages seems to have sprung from something very much like sacramental faith. And among the peoples who took pleasure in delineating beautiful natural objects and representing them in gay colours, the motive (religious or as yet magical only) tended to strengthen the æsthetic and constructive faculties, to lead men to discern what is beautiful, especially in the animal world, and to add at once to their joy in Nature and to the power to satisfy themselves with Nature's gifts. Of course the savages who scratched the figures of animals in their caves, even if they believed that such action would increase their quarry, were neither

sacramentalists nor naturalists, nor even artists in our sense of the words; but in some cases the germs of faith, science, and art were present, and the practice of animal-painting and carving, even if prompted by the necessity of seeking food, led to developments of a civilizing kind. If, as is probably the case, there were many primitive savages that did *not* execute works of the kind, the absence of such work does not prove that other means of rising to faith and to art were not open to them. Possibly their first religious types were of a different description.

One effect of religious ritual and custom on art is the perpetuation of ancient symbols and images. We are all acquainted with this fact in the study of religions, both of higher and lower grade. One knows how both in the ancient Greek world and among the Roman Catholic and Greek Church peasantry of to-day the images which receive the highest honour are not the most beautiful but the most ancient. Sometimes a traditional origin has been found to account for this honour, as in the case of the Virgin of Tenos, painted by St. Luke, and the image of the Ephesian Artemis, which fell from Zeus; but these traditions may be looked on as ætiological myths, invented to account for a veneration which age itself would be sufficient to produce. A *prima facie* judgment would be that here religion was in opposition to the development of art, but this view would be erroneous. The sanctity of primitive forms did not,

in a people like the Athenians, hinder the growth of new and more dignified types. The old-fashioned Athena and her owl might retain their position on the coinage, but the statue by Pheidias stood in her *cella* in the Parthenon, and was recognized by all as the worthiest representation of the goddess who ruled the city. Still, the coins, though not exactly sacramental, were symbolic in character, and we seem to see here a suggestion of the tendency of an anthropomorphic religion to encourage art, while one concerned mainly with symbols often prefers antique or even uncouth types. True, it may be said that the Panathenaic Procession of the Parthenon Frieze is nothing but the representation of a symbolic ceremony—the gift of a robe to Athena. But in reply it may be argued that here the exception proves or tests the rule, since the actual ceremony forms so small a part of the scheme that critics have disputed its presence. The frieze represents the citizens of Athens and their gods, idealized into noble and beautiful human beings, and idealization is poles apart from symbolism, at least in essential ideas.

This last fact was realized by many in the last days of Greek religion. In the Mysteries, as we have seen, the idea was set forth that the Divine is infinitely above and beyond any representation by the human hand, or any definite conceptions of the human mind, but to be reached by means of types and symbols

only. In a remarkable passage[1] Julian, whose religion was bound up with Mysteries and with the myths that gave a quasi-narrative explanation to the mystery rites, expressed his preference for strange tales about the Gods, for the reason that those which would set forth their nobility and virtue must needs represent them as *men*, even good and beautiful men, whereas the myths, or we may say the sacramental explanations of the Mysteries, point to somewhat above human nature altogether. From his point of view, art could never help man to rise to the loftiest religious conceptions, but sacraments could.

Yet the question arises : Does a sacramental religion allow scope for the exercise of the artistic faculties, and especially does it train to the realization and enjoyment of beauty ? Decorative art may find scope under its ægis, but so long as it remains in the symbolic stage, it must work under difficulties, sometimes even preferring the ugly, as apotropaic in effect. The paucity of interest which confined Jewish and Mohammedan art within narrow limits is due, or at least attributed to, a dread of religious anthropomorphism, and the same may be said of that of the early Christians, with one great exception. Their belief in the Incarnation made it possible to represent the object of their worship in human form. It would be irrelevant here to inquire into the sources of the early types of Christ in art. The art of the Catacombs

[1] *Oration* vii., 222.

does not present us with figures of youthful beauty—the times and the social surroundings of the early Christians would hardly have favoured such developments—but at least that art had escaped from the dilemma of restricting itself to the merely decorative, or of confining the Deity to human shape. In subjects it is intensely sacramental: the incidents both from the Old and from the New Testament which are chosen for representation are generally such as have or may have a sacramental significance—such as the turning of water into wine, and the Good Shepherd with his sheep.

Still it may be argued that though Christianity may not have hastened the decline of art in the ancient world, and though it may have shared with the Mystery Religions that preference of the morally significant over the sensibly beautiful, yet the growth of the Sacramental System was fundamentally Christian and essentially opposed to art. But here again we must distinguish between the subjects chosen for artistic representation and the forms which such representation might take. Certainly the elements most revered in worship wherein Transubstantiation has dominated are not intrinsically beautiful. But though the water and the wine are not capable of artistic elaboration, there is abundant scope in the carving of the paten, ciborium and chalice. Again, the sacramental character of the mediæval church has dominated and ennobled its architecture. Whether

the original plan of the church was the basilica or the private dwelling, it is clear that in ecclesiastical architecture the altar on which the host stands is the one centre to which all converges. A building, even one designed for religious instruction and worship, in which the sacramental purpose is subordinate or non-existent, may have excellent proportions and prove more suitable to the needs of a modern congregation than a Gothic cathedral; but it can never be so impressive or distinctly religious in character.

It is not, however, in the actual products of artistic genius and skill that one would seek for the most favourable influences of sacrament on art so much as in that sacramental view of life which, as we have seen, though consciously accepted by comparatively few, has always been as leaven working in the most religious souls of earlier and later times.

Dionysius the Arcopagite, whose general views have already been dealt with at some length,[1] gives among the "Names of God" Beauty or the Beautiful.[2] It is by participating in the Divine Nature in this particular sense that everything which we rightly call beautiful deserves the designation. This is the root idea of what we may call religious æsthetics, eloquently set forth by Ruskin in the second volume of *Modern Painters*, entitled "Ideas of Beauty," though his views can hardly be called popular to-day. As is well known, Ruskin would analyse our con-

[1] See Chapter VI. [2] *De divinis nominibus*, iv, 7.

ception of beauty so as to make each several type correspond to some Divine attribute : infinity, moderation, working by law, and the like. But in one respect it formed a noble justification and ideal for the Victorian school of landscape painting. To the devout artist God is manifested in Nature, or, in the phraseology of the sacramental idealist, all the life and beauty of nature may be taken as sign and symbol of a beauty which is inexpressible except by the inadequate means at man's disposal. This is Plato's view of the human artificer beholding a divinely-made pattern given to him to imitate as best he can.

It may be said that these views are too high-flown to have much practical effect on the production and appreciation of works of art. In fact, they have worked in combination or conflict with many and varying forces, and at the present moment there are so many divergent tendencies in art—some of them, apparently, verging on individualistic libertinism—that no one dominant tone is to be distinguished. Yet there is more feeling of the importance of art just now than, perhaps—in our country at least—for some centuries ; and in England, one may say, the only hope for art is that it may, in some measure, recover its former prestige by being taken frankly into the service of religion.

The difficulty here is that during the last half-century and longer, religious art had been patronized chiefly by those who had an imperfectly historical reverence

for the past, and would hark back to mediæval types without full sympathy with the mediæval spirit. Hence loss of liberty—fatal to true art of all kinds—and want of power to discern and follow new ideals. I do not, of course, refer to the pre-Raphaelite movement, which was at least in full imaginative sympathy with mediæval religion at its best, but rather to the sickly productions which disfigure some of our modern churches and occasionally the walls of our picture galleries—though happily the number of pseudo-sacred pictures sent to the Royal Academy has shrunk to a very small number. There is, however, one type of art which still flourishes and seems to be eminently in accordance with the sacramental view of life—that of landscape-painting. Of course it would be absurd to say that a good landscape painter must be a religious man, or that he and those who appreciate his work must consciously recognize a divine element in nature, yet the very idea that nature as nature and not merely as a background to human life is worthy of the artist's study and his highest efforts seem to indicate a belief—whether fixed or inchoate—of a divine reality underlying the sensible appearance of our mundane course.

Similarly with music. We have already seen how the art of hymnody was early pressed into sacramental service, and perhaps the great Masses have contributed more than any other human products to enhance the glory of the principal sacrament.

Intentionally sacramental music practically ceases, in Protestant countries, with the Reformation; it is replaced by the oratorio, celebrating some episodes of religious history as intellectually conceived, and by the chorale or psalm-tune, which seems to suit most religious services, whether the sacramental element is prominent or not. Secular music may or may not suggest a depth and power of working on and in our consciousness, which may appeal in different ways to hearers of various susceptibilities. It can hardly be called sacramental in character, except in cases where it really impresses on the hearer a recognition of some higher element in which we live beyond all sense and physical experience.

It is possible that what has been said about the sacramental value of art may be disparaged as a misplacement of words, tending to mental confusion. It may be alleged that men who have loved Nature best—such as Wordsworth—were not what we should commonly call sacramentarians, and that people who find more edification in concerts than in church services are still more off the lines of a sacramental system. But in reply I would say that the object even of definitely religious art is not to kindle religious emotion, nor is that in any sense the design of sacramental observance. The sacramental idea, as we have seen, is the recognition of the unseen and eternal veiled yet signified in the seen and temporal. It may and should be expressed, as I hope to show in my

concluding chapter, in sacramental ritual, but even apart from such ritual the idea may be set forth in various ways to suit various temperaments.

One negative point is clear: that when in music, painting, sculpture, or any other art, the character of the work is dominated by ephemeral fashions, individual cupidity, striving for effect, or any such low motive, the sacramental and all serious significance is gone. The art may or may not be innocent, but it has ceased to be profitable.

It is interesting to notice how much a common sacramental system contributed, through the Middle Ages and in the Western World, to a unity of culture, with similar educational institutions and methods, and facility for students and teachers to move from one place to another and to hold office in alien lands. This was, of course, closely connected with the fact of a common language—that in which the sacraments were dispensed. It may be said that here cause and effect are liable to be confused; that sacraments, generally speaking, were celebrated with a particular ritual and form of words in virtue of that unity which they helped to strengthen. Certainly the unity of belief and practice (except in a few minute particulars) between Latins and Greeks had no such combining power. On the other hand, where there were small differences in ritual, they sometimes become immensely exaggerated under the influence of racial feeling. On the whole, it may safely be said both

that the West European unity of culture during the Middle Ages was a good thing, and that it was promoted by the ecclesiastical unity, especially on the sacramental side. This view does not, of course, imply any sympathy with the persecution of bolder spirits that would strike out new lines for themselves, nor with crusades against recalcitrant communities. The differentiation of culture came about with and partly in consequence of the great differentiation in church systems at the Reformation.

It is far beyond my present task to consider how far the progress in science, philosophy, and the interpretation of history has been assisted or thwarted by the sacramental views of our own and previous times. It is, however, quite evident that belief in the permeation of the world of nature and man by a divine element has allowed much more liberty to the investigator and brought more lucidity into his results than has the assertion of a superhuman disposer of things and events. Church opposition to scientific examination of Nature and to many theories and criticisms has, of course, been exercised in the name and by the authority of those who held to a sacramental structure. It was, however, not in virtue but in spite of the sacramental basis of their organization that this opposition was organized, and was, for a time, inimical to general progress.

The doctrines of Design in nature and of Providence in history were for ages defended against a thorough-

going atheism. They were asserted in scientific or quasi-scientific phraseology and argued according to logical methods. It is not too much to say that both have in a sense broken down. Design on the part of an all-knowing artificer can hardly be maintained in view of the imperfection of the supposed mechanism, and the prodigious waste of material by which the desired ends are attained. Similarly, it becomes ever harder and harder to believe in a Power, like to us but greater, fashioning the world's course through the ages with so little regard to the improvement—even gradual—of human society and the establishment of a rule of righteousness. Yet if Design and Providence are gone, Atheism is gone too. There may be practical or speculative atheists, but mankind is better able to worship that which commands his unlimited admiration, and to trust to the goodness of a cause which may not visibly triumph, if he has cast off the theory of a remote yet knowable and by no means perfect controller, and rests his faith on the one source of Goodness, Truth, and Beauty. Participation in the life of this One and union with other souls in its fruition is the purpose of all sacramental action. The question remains whether actually instituted sacraments can permanently, for persons in general, contribute to this end.

CHAPTER XI

SACRAMENT AND MODERN MENTALITY

It would seem natural to conclude our survey, which has chiefly been historical, with some reference, of a more or less practical kind, to the place which sacramental institutions or the sacramental idea should be expected to fill in the thought and life of the era on which we are now entering. The chief difficulty in such a task lies in the extreme complexity of forces at work among us at this moment, and also the difficulty of ascertaining the sphere and the scope of any of them. What seemed essentially *modern* before the outbreak of the Great War, and even during the middle of its course, is now often scouted as a fashion of long ago. We have not had much leisure for thought, but intensity of feeling has sometimes hindered the progress expected, sometimes emphasized unduly factors of a transitory nature. Just before the War we were all realizing how the civilized world formed one Great Society, in which thought and activity were ever in intercommunication, and in which no part could suffer without detriment

to the whole system. Painful facts have corroborated that general statement, and forced us to share both in the general impoverishment and in the general unrest. During the War some of us who had never hoped for a millennium resulting from material progress had been led to conceive the possibility of a better and purer world to result from magnificent efforts of self-sacrifice. The spirit of self-sacrifice, if not dead, seems to be in abeyance; class war and gross materialism to have sprung up with fresh vigour. As to religion: we have been told much of the sincere though often inchoate and inarticulate faith generally found among soldiers of different nations; even the French, we hoped, might recover the religious spirit natural to their nation, though often turned aside to enthusiasms of a lower kind. We in England were to labour at raising our ideals and so far as possible reforming our institutions, so that when our men returned it might be to discover a really national church in which they might find a spiritual home. We all know that none of these predictions have been verified.

Nevertheless, pessimism is as much out of place as extravagant optimism. The human soul has wandered much through many centuries, and is not likely to find a straight road in the course of a few decades. The "vision glorious" which led to the formation of high hopes in the darkest days has not altogether faded. We need to learn not to be too positive in

our conclusions as to the religious character of the future or the ways in which we may assist it in assimilating the best experience of the past. But all of us who have had to trace the beginnings of great ideas and institutions, their frequent aberrations and degradations, their revivals under new conditions and with fresh meaning, may claim that reasonable experience should act along the same lines as the faith which "removes mountains."

In one respect the future is sure to resemble the past: there is not likely ever to be one type only, or even one predominant type in the religion of the future, though some types seen in the past will probably become effete and others may become temporarily or permanently prevalent. Thus—to keep to our immediate subject—sacrament will doubtless count for much with some individuals or societies, with others for comparatively little. And the forms or aspects of sacramentalism which survive will be such as combine most readily with the mental and spiritual condition of the future generations.

There are, however, tendencies now to be observed which favour or which militate against the sacramental spirit. The two most antagonistic thereto are also the influences most hostile to any religion of a high type: secularism and anthropomorphism. By secularism I do not understand denial of the being of God or of a supersensual world, but the spirit that finds in mundane human life enough to satisfy energies

and aspirations, and which is impatient of suggestions as to the Beyond. Of course the secularist may be high or lowly in his moral ideals and his æsthetic preferences according to his conception of this life beyond or below which he feels no desire to explore. This is not exactly the position of an Agnostic, who may believe in something beyond the world of sense and experience without being able to assert anything definite about it. The practical position of a secularist is exactly contrary to that of one who takes the sacramental view of life, in that to him the spiritual element in things is what man puts into them, while to the other the material manifestation is due to spiritual reality. Special sacraments are to the secularist human institutions based on superstitious fiction, though conceivably useful.

Anthropomorphism, on the other hand, though it may be pious and reverent in tone, is equally non-sacramental in principle. Attention has already been drawn to the fact that where a man regards his Deity as a being of like passions with himself, there is no need of symbolism in his worship, though certain symbolic expressions, such as courtesies like those practised by one human being to another, may have a fitting place. But a little argument on what is considered common-sense lines by persons whose religion is of this type would strip religious observance of all that gives special solemnity. I have heard it argued that as a human father does not expect his

child to ask for necessaries in an unnatural voice, it is idle to intone the Lord's Prayer. This is perhaps an extreme case. But there is always a danger, especially among English people, to suspect that what is not absolutely plain in significance is more or less unreal. Of course this tendency is most marked in persons who have not had much literary education. It is greatly to be dreaded as a possible concomitant of modern democracy, not but that the Demos who is to rule is first to be educated, but that his education is likely to be on lines unfavourable to imaginative development and to familiarity with great thoughts of former days. Naturally the crudest kind of anthropomorphism is almost bound to yield either to Atheism or to a more spiritual view of God and of His relation to man. One has heard again and again lately the soldier's question : " If there is a good and an almighty God, why didn't He stop the War at the beginning ? " implying that the questioner, if *he had been God*, would have done so without hesitation. The mystery is not solved when we reply that God is not as man, but it becomes part of the great mystery of love and sacrifice of which the chief of the sacraments is the embodiment.

Another anti-sacramental tendency is the present-day objection to discipline and restraint. This is possibly due in part to reaction from great tension, and it is by no means certain that we may not ere long see a strong reaction. Whether that will be of

a sacramental kind or not we cannot say. The opportunities which a sacramental system gives for individual self-examination and direction has already been sufficiently noticed. Perhaps one of the chief objections to it lies in the democratic distaste for anything like a priestly class and profession. A care of souls, as a formal institution, might, of course, be democratized, and spiritual discipline maintained by spiritual experts. But such a result seems somewhat removed from practical probability.

On the other hand, there are several tendencies in modern life which might seem to favour the continuance and growth of sacramentalism (in a broad sense of the term). Even democracy, and the passion for equality, should be friendly towards institutions which give dignity to every member of the human race, and pronounce the nullity of worldly trappings and even inherited distinctions. Of course the social concomitants of sacrament bear the mark of the world. Distinguished persons commonly approach the altar before humble folk, though without any recognized right to do so, and the baptism of a duchess's baby is a different performance from that of a pauper child. But the essential idea is the same for all alike, and one wishes that this kind of equality were more generally made prominent both in teaching and in ceremonial. True, there is great inequality in the measure in which each communicant or baptized person may be supposed to receive sacramental grace. But

these differences are of recipient capacity in the person who comes to the sacrament, not in the essential nature of the sacrament itself.

Again, there is the inclination in some schools of thought to refer all religious institutions and even doctrines to the pragmatic test. Can sacrament abide that test? The answer is not to be found by asking whether baptized persons are generally better than unbaptized—especially as in this case similar conditions in all other respects are not always to be found in the cases compared. Nor can we take a census of persons who go regularly to communion and of those who do not, with a view to moral and spiritual comparison. The doctrines and the habits of life attending sacramental observance have often been such as to obscure almost wholly its essential meaning. One has to look at the general result of sacramental observance through all the ages in various societies, and then it is not difficult to realize that—amid much accretion of formalism, contention, corruption of many kinds—it has been a perpetual witness to truths which are not always manifest, and a constant aid in the building up of the highest type of human character. Above all, it can hardly be denied that Sacrament tends to keep up a spirit of reverence. There are, perhaps, some spirits almost devoid of the power of veneration. But these are not numerous, and there can be no doubt that the most solemn acts of worship that any human being is capable of per-

forming may permeate his life to his own highest development and the good of his neighbours. "We live by admiration, hope and love."

This view of the subject is open to controversy. It may be said (as already hinted) that in Roman Catholic countries we often find, among flippant persons or societies, a conspicuous absence of reverence for solemn things. And again, there are many who profess to feel, and doubtless do feel, an awe and an aspiration inspired by a mountain sunset or a noble piece of music such as church-goers realize at the altar. But to what has already been said on this point of view, we may add that it is not religious rapture, not yet religious respect for things and places of which we are now thinking, so much as of the pursuit of habits which force on the consciousness of the observant a regard for the world as a living Temple of God, and this idea can best be assimilated in silence, and either in solitude or in the company of like-minded worshippers. Let it be freely allowed that many persons have risen to such a clear and perpetual recognition of the Divine Presence that sacraments are for them superfluous; while others are not sufficiently spiritual to rise to that recognition even by sacramental means. Probably the majority of mankind lies somewhere between these two extremes.

Another reason for insisting on the importance of the Christian sacraments at the present day is that they convey to many minds and hearts more of the

essence of the Christian religion than can be grasped in the declaration of doctrine or the study of history. We are all familiar with the necessity of re-stating doctrine in the light of modern knowledge. Our world theory, our sense of moral distinctions, our conception of possibility and probability, have necessitated a reinterpretation of dogma which to some persons has seemed to give it a more stable basis, to others to remove the basis altogether. We shall probably for years to come have to endure many heart-searchings on the part of those who feel the deepest sympathy with the inner meaning of Christianity but cannot bear to twist words into a non-natural sense ; and the loss of able would-be ministers of the Church through similar scruples. But on the sacramental side we have language which does not —at least to any modern thinker—convey a purely material significance, but which is to the religious soul pregnant with meaning and inspiration. Would it not be legitimate for our generation to follow the reverse process from that of the scholastic theologians, who turned the sacramental forms into dogmas, and to turn our dogmatic forms into sacrament ?

This question of dogma is bound up with the historical one. The growth of historical criticism, with the accumulation of a wealth of evidence as to ancient history, has borne fruit in new views as to the historical beginnings of the Christian religion and as to the actual career on earth of the Lord and Master whom

the Apostles proclaimed. These new acquisitions have been, to Christians generally, welcome up to a certain point, disappointing beyond it. They have helped us to realize more or less of Græco-Roman civilization and of Jewish progress and expectations in New Testament times. On what actually happened in Galilee and Jerusalem during the years in which we are most intensely interested, they leave us in the dark. As the Dean of St. Paul's says: "Of our divine Master no biography can ever be written." The "quest of the historical Jesus" has brought to light interesting things, but in its main object it has been a deplorable failure—proving that detached and sceptical writers can often be as wild in their hypotheses and as illogical in their conclusions as the most obscurantist of orthodox partisans.

This does not, of course, prove that there is no real historical basis to Christianity, including the life and teaching of Him from whom we take our name. Critical investigation has removed some difficulties in the stories of the life and thrown fresh light on the tenor of the teaching. Still, while it has in a sense made Christianity for us a historical as well as a living religion, it has not provided it with an immovable historical basis. But in Christian sacrament, while there is a doctrinal there is also a historical element. Certain historical events, though their exact sequence and their relation to other events may be disputed, are bound up with our sacraments of puri-

fication and of the common life. By emphasizing and clinging to the sacraments we avoid laying on our historical science a burden it is hardly strong enough to bear, however much the historical sentiment may rejoice in tracing the continuity of our religion from a remote past.

At the present moment, and especially in our own country, there is a strong feeling among the several Christian churches towards reunion and mutual understanding. Some would seek such reunion on the lines of hierarchical organization; others desire permission for elasticity in regular Christian teaching, especially by "interchange of pulpits"; others by common participation in Holy Communion. The first of these courses might be highly desirable, but is at the present moment hardly practicable; the second is less, perhaps, a desirable thing in itself than the removal of what seems to be an arrogant and irrational presumption. The third, *if* it could be secured against natural objections, seems the most desirable of all. Our standard of preaching—from Anglican and Nonconformist pulpits alike—is not so high that we can afford to lose any chance of bringing fresh light and thought to any congregation by the presence of some teacher who has the power and the means. Yet we do not gain much sense of fellowship with a congregation by sitting occasionally at the feet of their pastor, with whose views we may or may not agree. Kneeling with others before the Altar

is a very different thing. In fact, where earnest people of various denominations meet for consultation and prayer for distinctly Christian objects, they find it sometimes galling as well as unreasonable that they are not able to communicate together, even at the altar of an English church. This is, I believe, especially the case with the Student Christian Movement, among whom, as a *pis-aller*, unity of time is taken in compensation for unity of place, the old Nonconformist dislike of early communion being thrown to the winds.

It may be said that any wholesale admission to Communion would destroy it as a means of securing moral and spiritual discipline, as suggested above.[1] But there is, as far as I can see, no absolute hindrance in the way of securing some spiritual discipline, or guarantee of self-discipline. When the necessity is felt, some way of meeting it is likely to be found. Comprehension and laxity are by no means convertible terms.

Another point that has come very prominently forward in regard to the whole question of Sacrament is that of religious education. Probably a good many people would not consider that the conflict between denominational and undenominational teaching was tantamount to that between sacramental and non-sacramental, yet they might seem to have practically the same significance. The religious teaching given

[1] In Chapter VIII, p. 136 *seq.*

to children—more or less trustworthy Scripture history, a rather confused summary of Christian morals, enlivened by stories of saints and heroes, a minimum of direction as to prayer and to thoughts of God—all this is common ground to the denominational and undenominational teacher alike. They differ when they come to teach of Sacrament. Nonconformist parents and teachers say very little to children on this subject. The Church Catechism begins with an exposition of the duties supposed to be acknowledged in baptism, and ends with a remarkably lucid definition of sacrament and with the particular duties of communicants. Herein it differs from the Scotch Cathecism, beginning with the question: "What is the chief end of man?" Those who drew up the catechisms had not studied, as a modern elementary teacher has to, the subject of child-psychology, or they would have known that a normal child of five or six is equally incapable of apprehending either a rational teleology or a theory of representative obligation. But the ideals were clearly set before the teachers in both cases: by the Scotch Catechism a religious theory of man and the universe; by the English a personal obligation based on actual membership in a visible Church, with acknowledgment of the privileges as well as the duties thereto belonging.

Now in all probability these two kinds of instruction are desirable, though either may be driven to excess.

Some teachers may have done harm to children by instilling incomprehensible doctrine into their minds, though perhaps there is less danger of such an error at the present day. Others may have gone too far in following up the idea of asking, "What mean ye by this rite?" and have at least not discouraged an identification of religion with ceremony as prescribed by the Church. If we are to have a real revival of religious instruction in homes and schools, we want both the general and the particular. Children should be brought up in familiarity with the best thoughts of God that have come down to us through the ages, and with the figure of Christ as Christians have seen it. At the same time they need to be taught each one his or her obligations as citizens of a Christian land and as members (unless they repudiate membership) of a Christian church. At present church, school, and family alike show a lamentable failure. The remedy is *not* to make all teaching sacramental, nor yet to make it Christian and non-sacramental, still less to omit it altogether. The natural solution would be to leave the sacramental teaching to the Sunday school and make the other a more definite and serious element in the general school course. But a satisfactory division of provinces cannot be made till teachers as well as the clergy are at least agreed as to main principles.

In one respect sacramental religion may seem likely to hold its ground in the spiritual life and habits

of this and the coming generation: it is eminently favourable to the personal and individual element in the religious consciousness. Of course this statement may be opposed by an assertion of the collective character of all sacramental observance and its connection—already sufficiently dwelt on—with authority and with social activity. Yet the fact remains that, for those who take religion as something between the soul and God (an ambiguous phrase, often abused), sacrament is one of the chief "means of grace." We see how in the Pagan religions of Classical times there seems to have been little room for strong personal feeling on the part of the worshipper towards his Deity. But when Hellenism was dying down, as it might seem, the Mysteries evidently acted as a powerful stimulant to personal religious faith. And at the present day many persons to whom most forms of religious doctrine and worship are more or less alien can find a refuge in so personal an act as participation in Holy Communion. The reason of this—in our own times—is, as just pointed out, that the idea of *reinterpretation* which, applied to definite statements in creeds and formulæ, seems sometimes hardly legitimate, is entirely in place where the symbol is set forth in acts rather than in words.

At the same time, we can hardly say that the religion of the future is bound to be a mystery religion. One is inclined to doubt whether the division into mystery and non-mystery religions does not attempt to draw

too hard and fast a line. *All* religions have something of mystery about them; all have a footing in the field of moral and social life. I would demur to the statement that St. Paul made Christianity into a mystery religion. What form it would have taken if he had never been converted we can hardly say; but doubtless if it had thrown its nets wide to take in much of the heathen world it would have absorbed somewhat of the character and institutions of that world in religion as in politics. With sacramental and non-sacramental or less sacramental religions we seem to have a question rather of degree than of kind.

We need not venture on a forecast of the character of Sacrament in the religion of the future if, as we earnestly desire but dare not affirm with certainty, *one* religion (it may be embodied in many churches) is to be the possession of our posterity. But something of the nature of sacrament is likely to survive all changes in our civilization and international life. We are and ever shall be cognizant that reality is shrouded in mystery, and yet that men must needs endeavour to reach the supersensual by means of the corporeal. So long as man is prone to err he will ever be hampered by superstitions and by exaggerated views of half-truths. If the progress of the race is now becoming, to leaders in thought, less and less an object of certainty in things material and intellectual, still less is that progress to be confidently awaited in things spiritual. But limitations of time, space

and capacity do not diminish the longing which is uttered in passionate prayer and continuous effort for a wider participation than has ever yet existed in that glorious vision of the Eternal World vouchsafed to the eye of faith. If sacraments bring that vision nearer, at least to some waiting souls, they will fulfil their mission in days to come as in the ages of the past. Perhaps some of the most decidedly spiritual natures will not require their assistance; many of a coarser type will fall below the apprehension of their significance. But unless human proclivities change greatly in the coming generations, we may feel that in passing down to those who come after us what we have received of sacrament and symbol, we are in truth handing on a living torch. In faith and in worship, recognition of fellowship with the past will ever help towards the apprehension of the Life Eternal.

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